



ADVENTURES FOR LIFE

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30 PAGES
of top jobs

Gap between good and bad attacked

Standards in schools 'are still slipping'

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

SIR Claus Moser, the Oxford don who made a speech six years ago which ignited public anxiety over education, gave a warning last night that standards had slipped still further.

The former Warden of Wadham College, an adviser to the Prince of Wales, welcomed recent government initiatives in schools. But he argued that underachievement had become even more serious since 1990.

In a speech to the Royal Society of Arts in London Sir Claus said that Britain was lagging behind Western Europe and the Far East. There was a widening gap between the "good educational lives of the few and the poor ones of the many".

He said that among the most serious concerns were:

□ **Illiteracy:** a serious and "disgraceful" problem. National tests of 11-year-olds showed only 44 per cent of 11-year-olds reaching the expected level in English.

□ **Innumeracy:** schools paid too little attention to arithmetic and British nine-year-olds came third from bottom in a table of 14 countries.

□ **School buildings:** many children were left in "appalling conditions". A survey estimated that £3 billion was needed over the next five years just to keep schools open.

□ **Vocational courses:** these left the workforce short of "middle qualifications" — crucial to economic success.

Before his address Sir Claus said he had been shocked to find that one in 11 teenagers was leaving school without qualifications. This was one in five in the most deprived areas. "The gap between good comprehensive schools and appalling ones is



Sir Claus: Britain lags behind Europe and East

still widening," Sir Claus said. "There are plenty of good comprehensives in Scotland and in rural areas and then there are schools that none of us would send our children to."

Sir Claus, a former head of the Government's statistical service, added: "The more I have looked at developments over the last five years, the more I have been dismayed that the emphasis all the time is on making sure that the able children and the slightly more privileged are not handicapped. The bottom half is even worse off."

Almost six years ago, Sir Claus told the British Association for the Advancement of Science that the 1990s should be designated a "decade for education." The speech prompted a welter of government initiatives and Sir Claus founded the independent National Commission on Education with the backing of the Prime Minister. But last night Sir Claus said that young people were no better off than their counterparts 20 years ago.

He accused ministers of putting electoral advantage above the interests of pupils in

framing policies on education vouchers, grammar schools and the expansion of the Assisted Places Scheme. "It is all about politics, not about children," he said.

Pinning his hopes on a Labour government to arrest the decline in standards, Sir Claus challenged Tony Blair to prove his party's commitment by earmarking at least an extra £3 billion a year for education. He said Labour policy statements, with the exception of opposition to selective education, were free of dogma than the Tories'.

Sir Claus called for nursery education, primary schools and the teaching profession to be given priority by an incoming administration. "On these the entire structure rests, and they should come before anything else in thought, research and resources in the opening years of a new government."

Nursery vouchers should be scrapped and replaced by a phased programme of provision for three and four-year-olds, with primary school funding improved. Sir Claus hoped that grammar and grant-maintained schools would become "first-class comprehensives" serving children of all abilities and backgrounds.

A spokesman for Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, said it was "nonsense" to suggest that the reforms were politically inspired.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, said: "This is a clear and ringing indictment of the Government's education policies. Little has improved and the Secretary of State should be ashamed. Sir Claus could not be clearer: standards are unacceptably low."



Martin Wyld, the gallery's chief restorer, with Holbein's *The Ambassadors*

National Gallery accused of ruining paintings

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

THE National Gallery, which will this month unveil a major restoration, has come under attack for its "secretive" art cleaning policies and for a series of scientific "blunders" since the Second World War that have altered the look of Old Masters.

A New York audience heard Michael Daley, a British art campaigner, accuse the London gallery of "ruining" a number of valuable paintings, including work by Titian, Veronese and Giampietrino. Mr Daley said he "feared the worst" over Holbein's masterpiece *The Ambassadors*, which the gallery has spent three years cleaning. The 1533 double portrait will go on show on April 29, coinciding with a BBC television documentary.

Mr Daley, a member of the peppery pressure group Artwatch, gave a lecture to the Arts Students League in Manhattan. He quoted from the latest edition of the National Gallery's small-circulation *Technical Bulletin* which admits, in an apparent volte face, that medieval artists were known to use a final, thin layer of oil and resin to tone down

parts of their work. Such a theory has long been resisted by the gallery's cleaning experts, Mr Daley said.

He feared that the cleaning solvents used by the gallery often destroyed those tonal layers, altering the artistic balance of great works and robbing them of subtlety. "Things which were once different become more equal," he said. The National Gallery conducted "the most ferocious cleaning" with solvents of any gallery in the world and was guilty of "removing varnishes in their entirety as swiftly as possible."

The *Bulletin* report described the restoration of two paintings by Giampietrino, an early 16th-century student of da Vinci. The report noted that Giampietrino would apply a final layer of walnut oil and resin to tone down colours.

A similar claim about medieval art was made in 1950 by the scholar Sir Ernst Gombrich, one of the first people to express fears about the gallery's cleaning practices. He was rebuked by the Trafalgar Square art establishment. When Mr Daley brought the latest *Bulletin* to

the attention of Sir Ernst, 87, the old man expressed great delight and said "there is now more joy in heaven".

Mr Daley said he had been refused access to the Holbein during the cleaning process and had not been allowed to see restorers' dossiers. Nor were the solvents disclosed. He feared the chemicals used by the gallery in past restorations had again been used, and he did not like to predict what they might have done to the painting's finish.

Last night, however, Martin Wyld, the chief restorer at the National Gallery, dismissed the idea that the gallery had been "secretive".

"Everybody who knows about German Renaissance paintings has been in to see *The Ambassadors*. Over the past three years, several dozen scholars, curators and conservators from museums in this country, and in Europe and America, have seen it twice during its treatment, at the beginning and the end. All national newspaper art critics were also invited at the beginning and end."

Asked why he had refused to show the painting to the public, Mr Daley said: "Yes, I would say that was an understatement. It's very sad, of

Duke and Duchess to stay 'bestest of friends'

By ALAN HAMILTON AND EMMA WILKINS

THE Duchess of York declared yesterday that she would remain "the bestest of friends" with her estranged husband as the couple, and 28 other petitioners, were granted a divorce in their absence in the High Court's Family Division. The hearing lasted less than three minutes.

Under the rubber-stamp simplicity of "quickie" divorce procedure there was no need for either party to be present. Apart from judge and clerk, the only other occupants of the

course it's sad. It was a personal decision between Andrew and I and no one else was involved." Asked about her future, she said: "We'll take every day as it comes."

The Duke was at the former marital home in Sunninghill, Berkshire, preparing to drive to work at the Royal Navy base at Portland, Dorset, on his way to weekend exercises in Scandinavia.

Having been granted a decree nisi yesterday, the Duke need only apply by post in six weeks' time for the decree to be made absolute — when the ten-year marriage will be over.

The formal ending of the royal union was in the sharpest of contrasts to its beginning. The couple married in July 1986 in Westminster Abbey before a worldwide television audience of 500 million.

The only grounds for divorce given, and the only ones necessary, were that the couple had been separated for at least two years, and that both parties consented.

6The damage to the Royal Family comes from our having higher expectations of them?

William Rees-Mogg, page 20

small and simply furnished courtroom in Somerset House were a petitioner in an entirely different case objecting to costs and 25 reporters.

While the hearing was in progress, the Duchess emerged from her Swiss skiing chalet at Verbier, where she is spending a week's holiday with the couple's children — Princess Beatrice, seven, and Princess Eugenie, six.

She said she and the Duke had spoken by telephone before the hearing. "I speak to him every day. The children are well, everyone is well. Our children are very secure and happy children because they know their mother and father are the bestest of friends."

Asked if this was the saddest day of her life, she said: "Yes, I would say that was an understatement. It's very sad, of

Duchess's future, page 4



"I'd just like you to know that you're still my bestest friend"

Peres is urged to continue attacks

Israel's top military officer in Lebanon has issued an unprecedented challenge to Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, urging him not to order a swift end to the attacks on Lebanon.

The intervention by Brigadier-General Giora Inbar has prompted a political dispute about the conduct of the war. Page 17

Fall in jobless

The Government welcomed an unexpectedly large fall in unemployment yesterday after the number of people out of work and claiming benefit dropped by 25,700. Page 25

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Pig heart pioneers win global backer

By JEREMY LAURANCE, HEALTH CORRESPONDENT

THE prospect of the first pig-to-human transplant moved closer yesterday after the international drug firm, Sandoz Pharma, bought the first human transplant this year if progress continued in the lab and we overcame certain regulatory issues. That is still the position.

Dr Wallwork said it would "probably not" make him a millionaire when account was taken of other investors in Imutran. The company was founded by Dr White and Dr Wallwork with Ian Kent, a Cambridge businessman, in 1984 and today has 45 employees.

The company has bred a herd of genetically modified pigs by injecting human genes into pig embryos to provide the organs for the cross-species transplants, known as xenotransplants. Imutran's aim is to breed thousands of genetically modified pigs from which organs can be harvested.

In experiments last year, 18 transgenic pig hearts transplanted into monkeys were still beating up to 60 days later. Normally a pig's heart would turn black and be rejected within two minutes of being transplanted into another species.

Dr Wallwork said yesterday that the purchase would ensure their work would go forward. "We said last year that we would do the first human transplant this year if progress continued in the lab and we overcame certain regulatory issues. That is still the position."

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Salome by Giampietrino, left, and Veronese's *Family of Darius*



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Destination unknown as Short steams ahead

It is often difficult to imagine an MP actually doing any of the jobs on which she or he offers opinions. To the late Reginald Maudling, who as plump President of the Board of Trade complained at how long it took the British worker to build a car, Dennis Skinner once shouted: "An' 'ow long would it tek you, fatts?" The arrow punctured.

Yesterday, Michael Fabricant (C, Mid Staffs) spluttered that unlike Labour MPs, he had real experience of engineering, but it was not easy to visualise the strawberry-blond Mr Fabricant in oily overalls, at the lathe. How

refreshing, therefore, to find a debate about trains led by Labour's Transport Spokeswoman, Clare Short. Ms Short is one of the few MPs it is possible to picture driving a steam engine.

Fresh from her tax gaffe and opening the debate on Railtrack, her locomotive skills were now on trial. From her cab at the dispatch box, Driver Short checked the Labour train coupled behind her.

It boasted many carriages, including a couple of after-lunch sleeping cars, for (by contrast to the Tories) the Opposition had turned out in force. You cannot say Labour



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

is a very sleek train, a high-speed train or even a Sprinter: a distinctly mixed train, but at least they are all hitched together these days, on the same track and more or less willing to be hauled along, groaning a bit, in the same direction.

From the corner, standing in the shadows, wary Chief Signalman (and Whip) Dewar, watched, eyes hooded, as Ms Short's train pulled out of

the station. Warm cheers from the Labour benches sustained her.

Driver Short was nervous. Consulting her handwritten notes, she wobbled but was never quite derailed. Clattering over the points she tried a little clumsily to hitch up carriages from Northern Ireland, reminding Ulster MPs that their railways too faced privatisation, and inviting their votes. Gathering mo-

mentum and confidence, she took the parliamentary equivalent of wet leaves on the line — a scripted joke about tax — at speed and with courage. She made it through with ease.

A Tory vandal, Patrick Nicholls (Teignbridge) lobbed bricks on to the line, in the form of a sneer at the erstwhile British Rail: but they were quickly crushed and she steamed on.

In all this she was much encouraged by Stoker Prescott. Labour's Deputy Leader kept up a rumble of growls, cheers and gestures in her support.

Driver Short: "This is very important indeed."

Stoker Prescott: "Absolute!"

Driver Short: "Railtrack issued a false prospectus."

Stoker Prescott: "Like the Tory manifesto! Grrr..."

Then she approached a tricky junction just a shade fast. Labour would increase the efficiency of the railways, she gabbled. A Tory tried to throw the points: "How?" he interrupted.

"With higher levels of investment," she countered, still on track.

Transport Minister George Young tried to throw the next

set of points. "I'm interested in that remark about investment," he said, craftily. "Where from?"

"Public/private partnerships," wobbled Short. Stoker Prescott waved a volume of Labour's proposals for partnerships. Rattled but on track, Short clattered on.

Where, ultimately, this train is going remains unclear. Important junctions lie ahead, and Thin Controller Tony Blair has a timetable of his own. But sketchwriters (we trainpotters of the parliamentary world) returned to Thermo Flasks yesterday with no accident to report.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Publisher withdraws 'racist' IQ book

A book that claims black people are less intelligent than white people has been withdrawn by the publisher, John Wiley & Sons said. The author, Chris Brand, had made "repellent" assertions in his book *The g Factor: General Intelligence and its Implications*, due to be launched today. Mr Brand, a psychology lecturer at Edinburgh University who describes himself as a scientific racist, said the decision was "stupid and cowardly". He is seeking legal advice. Students at the university have asked that he be removed as their lecturer.

Sex case acquittal

Donald Macdonald, 55, a Free Church of Scotland professor of theology, was acquitted in Edinburgh of one charge of indecent assault when the alleged victim said the attack happened a year earlier than the date on the charge sheet. The trial continues on five other charges of indecent assault, involving five women, which the professor denies.

Claim dismissed

The Ministry of Defence last night refused to accept a claim by the parents of Louise Jensen, the 22-year-old Dutch girl killed by three Royal Green Jackets soldiers in Cyprus, that the Army was partially responsible for her death. But the ministry confirmed that any claim from Pool and Anette Jensen for compensation would be treated "sympathetically".

Killer locked up

A man who stabbed an academic to death at York University and wandered round the campus in his clothes, was sent to a secure hospital indefinitely by Leeds Crown Court, Robin Pask, 34, from Bolton, Greater Manchester, admitted the manslaughter of Elizabeth Howe, 34, on the grounds of diminished responsibility while attending an Open University course.

Driver free

Philip Hackwell, 29, who bundled an unconscious woman into his boot thinking he had killed her in a car accident, was given a suspended eight-month sentence at Ipswich Crown Court for trying to pervert justice. He freed her when she banged on the lid. He was banned for 12 months and fined £100 for careless driving.

Protest at editor

More than 170 journalists at the *Financial Times* passed a vote of no confidence in the paper's editor, Richard Lambert, and his deputy, Andrew Gowers, in protest at proposed job cuts. Six staff on the picture desk are to be made redundant and 16 sub-editors have been told their six-month employment contracts would not be renewed.

Law resignation

Henry Hodge, the Law Society council member who fought unsuccessfully against Martin Mears for the presidency last year, is resigning after 12 years. Mr Hodge, 52, who is taking up a part-time post with the Legal Aid Board, said he thought the Law Society, under its present leadership, was becoming "a bit of a laughing stock".

Potter award

A drama script idea about a young man who falls in love with a travelling salesman has won the £10,000 Dennis Potter Play of the Year Award. Glasgow playwright John Milarky's "outline" submission for his play *Lak A Note To Follow Soh* will be made into a television drama. The award goes to playwrights of exceptional promise.

Major refuses to pander to the 'reckless' Right

FROM JILL SHERMAN IN PRAGUE AND PHILIP WEBSTER

JOHN MAJOR let it be known last night that he would resist pressure for radical right-wing policies after the Tories' drubbing at the Staffordshire by-election last week.

The Prime Minister told senior colleagues that he regarded demands for hefty tax cuts as "reckless and silly" and he has made plain that he will not be pushed into a panic Cabinet reshuffle to restore the Tories' fortunes. His firm line emerged amid a fresh outbreak of Conservative tensions over the party's plight

with senior MPs criticising an early morning outburst by Brian Mawhinney yesterday in which he accused a BBC interviewer of suggesting the Tories should "dump the Prime Minister".

The party chairman, who remained unrepentant about his attack on Radio 4's *Today* presenter Sue MacGregor, was accused by some colleagues of having chosen the wrong target in attacking a respected journalist with a reputation for fairness, and of handing ammunition to Labour. The angry exchange over-

shadowed the launch of the Conservative and Labour local election campaigns.

When Ms MacGregor reminded Dr Mawhinney that in 1990 the Tories had "got rid of" the poll tax and Margaret Thatcher, and suggested the party would have to do something equally dramatic to avoid losing more council seats, Dr Mawhinney exploded.

"What you have just suggested to me in front of the nation is that we should dump the Prime Minister," he said. "You drew the parallel with Mrs Thatcher and that is a ludicrous and indefensible question and if you think I'm annoyed with you it is because it is that kind of sneaky question by *Today* programme presenters which so annoys people who listen to this programme up and down the country."

Labour accused the Tory chairman of trying to "bully" the BBC and professed themselves so delighted by his "tantrum" that they replayed the interview to journalists attending the launch of their council election campaign.

John Prescott said: "I must thank the Tory chairman for blurring out what is really being thought by most Tory

MPs at the moment — dump the Prime Minister."

He added: "We will be keeping a very wary eye on the BBC to make sure they do not cave in in the face of the orchestrated campaign of intimidation being led by a desperate, rattled and incompetent Mr Mawhinney."

The *Today* programme stood its ground and a spokesman insisted its presenters would not change their interviewing style. "We believe Sue MacGregor's question was completely justified and pertinent," he said.

But Mr Mawhinney's supporters said his attack had been justified. It echoed the stream of letters received at Conservative Central Office suggesting that the programme was tough on Tories and soft on Labour.

One said the Tories had taken

60 telephone calls yesterday backing Mr Mawhinney.

The jittery atmosphere among Tory MPs has been heightened by persistent suggestions by informed Westminster sources that the decision to hold the Staffordshire South-East by-election last Thursday was taken against the advice of Mr Mawhinney, who wanted it to be held on the day of the local elections next month in order to get the bad news out of the way on the same day. It is said that Mr Major overruled the advice because he wanted to observe the convention that the by-election be called within three months of the death of the former MP.

Mr Major's supporters have in turn complained that the campaign was not well-run and have accused the organisers of failing to warn

him how bad the result could be. Friends say that he remains shaken by the scale of the near 14,000 reverse.

The Prime Minister, who flew to Prague yesterday on a four-day tour of Eastern Europe, has effectively rejected the demand of John Redwood, whom he defeated for the leadership last year, for "a moral crusade in tax cutting" and a shift to the right on Europe. Mr Major told colleagues yesterday that he had no intention of changing tack to suit his critics. "Judge me on my record," he has told friends.

Mr Major has made clear that tax cuts cannot be considered in isolation and must be weighed against public spending commitments and plans. "You cannot do anything in isolation," he has said. "You have to look at the public

expenditure side and public commitments."

Mr Major is determined the Government is not seen to panic after the Staffordshire defeat or the expected bad result in the May local elections. He has indicated that no early reshuffle is on the cards and he may not even carry one out in July. He has told friends that he has not even started reshuffling his ministers in spite of continual reports that one or other is to be dropped. "People say it's July so there must be a reshuffle."

The Prime Minister has voiced strong doubts over whether there will be any further defections. Nevertheless his cautious approach to tax cuts will appeal to any Tory dissidents who may be considering jumping ship.

Peter Riddell, page 8



Sue MacGregor was accused during an interview of calling for the Tories to dump Mr Major

Cook signals return to values of 'old' Labour

BY ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ROBIN COOK raised the banner of the Labour Left yesterday with a powerful speech in which he committed the party to protecting the poor, strengthening union links and increasing earnings for the low paid.

The Shadow Foreign Secretary set out a hard-line approach to reversing Tory policies, claiming that Labour would be the party of "social solidarity".

In language far removed from that used by Tony Blair last week, Mr Cook underlined Labour's commitment to equality and community, making the most vulnerable in society the party's first priority in government.

While Mr Blair used last week's visit to the US to emphasise the party's new centre-ground image, Mr Cook stressed its commitment to maintaining traditional Labour values. Mr Cook's speech to the Scottish Trades Union Congress was hailed by Labour traditionalists as sending a clear signal to the leadership to avoid further moves to the Right.

Against nervousness among Scottish Labour activists over the party's direction, Mr Cook mapped out a strategy based on equality and community, in which low pay, poverty and unemployment would be the first targets. "The poor may be

many times more than top taxpayers, but they get a tenth of the public attention," he said. "Labour must speak for the poor. We must do it because our values of equality and community make us the party of social solidarity."

"Because each of us understands that if we accept a society that does not help those who are vulnerable and weak, then it will not help us when we are vulnerable and weak."

As the most prominent left-wing Shadow Cabinet member, Mr Cook is viewed by Labour's traditional wing as pivotal in preventing the party moving away from its socialist roots. His role in overseeing

the development of party policy has reassured some backbenchers that traditional Labour values will be protected. Far from pitching for the middle-ground from which Labour has captured many Tory votes, Mr Cook said that Labour's bid for power would benefit the poorest. "We want power so that we can use it in the interest of justice, not for the interest of the privileged. And we want power so that we can share it with the people of our nation from whom it has been taken."

While Mr Cook did not stray from established policy, he set a very distinctive tone in a speech from which the term "new Labour" was conspicuously absent. However, Mr Blair's aides were keen to point out that the speech had been written with the leader's agreement.

Ken and Barbara Follett accepted undisclosed libel damages in the High Court yesterday over a column by Anne Robinson in *Today* newspaper which questioned the sincerity of their fundraising activities for the Labour Party.

News (UK) Ltd, publishers of the paper until its recent closure, its former editor, Richard Stott, and Miss Robinson accepted that the attack went beyond legitimate political exchange.



Cook: "Labour must speak for the poor"

Gallery accused of art 'blunders'

Continued from page 1
to show the dossier to Mr Daley, he said: "We've shown him a great many restorers' dossiers in the past. We tend to restrict access to these working notes to experts in the field."

"As for the Giampietrino work, Mr Daley has confused an oil layer and a varnish layer exactly as he accuses restorers of doing. What was found on Giampietrino's *Christ Carrying the Cross* was a glazing layer of brown oil paint, not varnish. Like all oil layers, it has dried extremely hard and no such glazing layer could be removed ac-

cently. There is still no evidence that a coloured varnish layer was ever used in the way that Mr Daley suggests. Such coloured oil paint layers are extremely rare in Renaissance painting — there was no sign, for example, of any such layer in the other Giampietrino painting in the National Gallery, *Salome*."

In an attempt to back up his claims, Mr Daley produced "before and after" photographs of Giampietrino's *Salome*. Before cleaning, the areas near the severed head of John the Baptist were cast in shadow — a moral statement by the artist, Mr Daley sug-

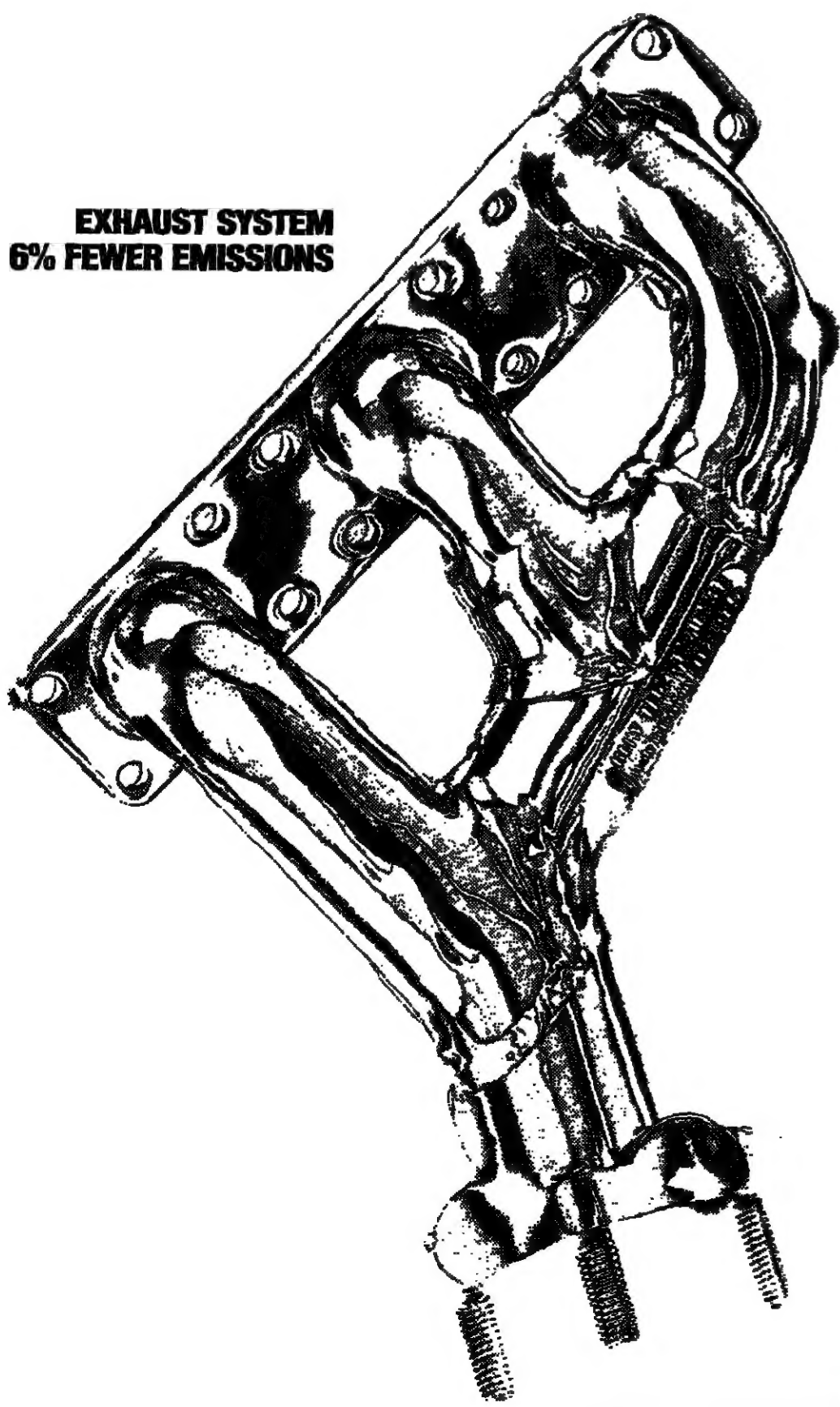
gested, with the artist deploying tonal values to create a definite effect. After its restoration the painting has lost those subtleties, and is much lighter. A 1956 restoration of Veronese's *Family of Darius Before Alexander the Great* produced similar effects.

However, Mr Wyld dismissed the criticism of *Salome*. "He may have looked at a dark print and a light print — without seeing the actual work. If anything, in reality, it is just as dark and the contrasts [are] accentuated by the cleaning," he said.

Mr Daley and Artwatch first expressed their fears to

Nicholas Baring, the National Gallery chairman, in a letter last September. More than a month later Mr Baring replied to say that he was "satisfied that the conservation and scientific specialists of the gallery are fully in touch with new developments". Mr Baring did not see any cause for the cleaning moratorium suggested by Artwatch.

At the end of his lecture Mr Daley was surrounded by art lovers. Mr Daley, who repeated a call for a restoration moratorium at the gallery, quoted the words of Degas: "A man who touches a picture ought to be deported".



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German-born widow to sue over internment

BY ADRIAN LEE

A GERMAN-born pensioner who says that she was wrongly interned as an enemy alien during the Second World War has been granted legal aid to seek compensation from the Government.

Gertrude Timmis, 78, a widow, said that she decided to sue more than 50 years after the end of the war because she cannot forget the humiliation she endured. She spent three years in prisons and camps and says that she was victimised.

Mrs Timmis, who lives in Droitwich, Hereford and Worcester, says that she should have been exempt from internment because her stepbrother served in the Royal Navy. "I feel very bitter about what happened to me and when I remember the conditions in prison and the abuse I got when I hadn't done anything wrong, I feel sick to the bottom of my stomach. I am not being greedy, I just want my name cleared."

"I was given the worst chores and made to work really hard. The criminals were given better treatment than me. We were stripped to the skin and given internal examinations. We were treated like animals."

The decision to intern thousands of people was controversial at the time. In August 1940, a letter to *The Times* described the policy as "conceived in panic and... incapable of sober justification".



Gertrude Timmis: jail cooks spat in her food

The writers, who included Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, Gilbert Murray and H.G. Wells, called for an end to the practice, describing internment as cruel.

Mrs Timmis was interned in 1941, ten years after her arrival in Britain at the age of 13. Her mother, who died when Mrs Timmis was a child, had settled here after marrying a Scotsman. Mrs Timmis was still using her German name of Stang because she had not been legally adopted.

Her stepbrother George Addison, on whom the case hinges, died when his ship, the

destroyer *HMS Quorn*, was sunk off France by a German mini-submarine in 1944.

Mrs Timmis, who was widowed twice, says that she has official papers stating that her internment was an error. Her relationship to a man serving in the forces should have allowed her to remain free. Her solicitor David Haughton said: "We are trying our best to get this to court but it is proving difficult because so many of the relevant documents have been destroyed."

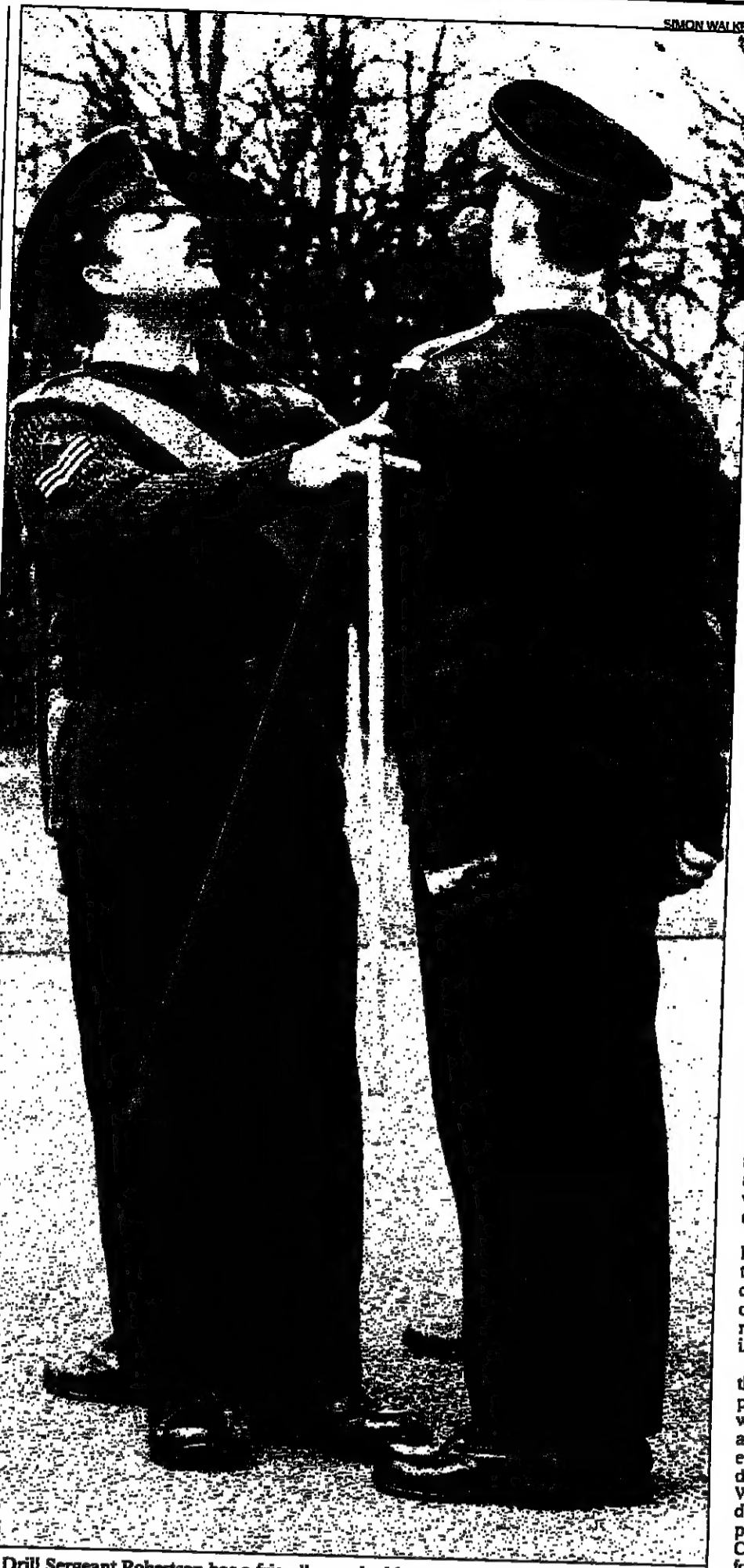
Mrs Timmis said: "I consider myself British, this is my home, but I feel I have been let down by my country. Now I am getting older I may not be able to afford to look after myself and if I want to do something I have to do it now, before it is too late. I am not asking for a fortune, just compensation for the three years of my life and the wages I lost."

The Home Office confirmed that Mrs Timmis had been held under the Emergency Powers (Defence) Act of 1939. It said that it was not aware of any payments having been made to former internees.

Mrs Timmis, one of 23,000 people of German and Austrian origin who were interned, was held at Winsor Green prison, Birmingham; Holloway, north London; Liverpool and the Isle of Man. She said that at Holloway the cooks spat in her food and she went on hunger strike to get a transfer.

She was released in 1944 on condition that she agreed to be repatriated but managed to remain in Britain. "They just forgot about me." She has a slight German accent and said that some people in her home town still refused to accept her.

Nicholas Jacobs, who has published a book on the subject, *The Internment of Aliens* by Francois Lafitte, said: "It is very brave of her to do this. There was never a general apology for this panic measure—I think because the Government feared legal action. It is now considered by historians to have been unnecessary. Some people were extremely badly treated."



Drill Sergeant Robertson has a friendly word with a military detainee at Colchester

Army assures its reluctant guests that camp will be no tea party

BY MICHAEL HORSNELL

SHORT back and sides, military fatigues and square-bashing were highlights of the regime announced yesterday for young offenders when the Prison Service's much-heralded "boot camp" opened its doors for inspection.

The Young Offender Institution (YOI) in the garrison town of Colchester will take 32 inmates from this autumn, alongside 200 military detainees, at a cost of over £1 million a year. Lieutenant Colonel Glen Grant, the commandant, said: "Reveille will be at 0600 hours. You can be sure we shan't be taking them a cup of tea when we wake them up."

Colonel Grant, who will be the military governor of the institution, added: "It's not a harsh regime. There's no cruelty or any attempt to demean anyone. It's not *The Hill*, but it's hard."

The military ethos of the camp, which is within the confines of the Military Corrective Training Centre for Army, Royal Navy and RAF offenders, is what Ann Widdecombe, the Prisons Minister, hopes will prove to be a telling step in tackling the problem of persistent offenders.

She said: "The Home Secretary and I have been impressed by what goes on at the MCTC. The sense of discipline, of smartness, of calm and, most importantly, of achievement, is clear as one walks around and talks to detainees."

"We decided that we would like to test whether the military approach to custody could benefit civilian young offenders and be effective in reducing the level of reoffending among them."

In spite of criticism within the Prison Service, officials pointed out that while there was 70 per cent recidivism among young civilian offenders, only 7 per cent of military detainees reoffended. Miss Widdecombe, who disclosed details of the venture in a parliamentary answer in the Commons earlier yesterday, found military staff anxious to prove her right when she

visited the institution. At the glasshouse farm, where servicemen were concreting a new slurry base for the pigs, Staff Sergeant Mike Baron said: "Shovelling muck all day can be fairly arduous."

The farm and education centre, where motor maintenance, carpentry, bricklaying and decorating skills are taught, are intended to provide a purpose in life for the young offenders, who will spend six months with the Army after being judged suitable.

Compulsory gym each day, parade calls and inspections are intended to provide "backbone". Only bayonet drills and target practice will be absent from the civilian programme.

Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, who attended yesterday's open day, said: "This scheme is not intended to provide a source of ready recruits to the armed forces, as I have heard described. What we can do is pass on military skills to help the Prison Service deal with a worrying social problem. This is an important and exciting initiative. Self-confidence, self-esteem and self-belief can be imparted to civilians as well as military detainees and this is our aim."

The 32 will live in F-block, apart from military detainees, but will mix with servicemen for educational classes and vocational training. A barber will visit the block twice a week to ensure that haircuts are military length.

Richard Tilt, Director-General of the Prison Service, said: "I fully support the pilot scheme. It offers the opportunity to develop self-esteem and self-worth. This is an excellent training, custodial establishment."

The scheme, which will cost £28,700 per young offender compared with no more than £18,000 in a normal institution, will be kept under constant review.

Jack Straw, Shadow Home Secretary, described the initiative as an admission of the Government's failure to tackle youth crime.

INTERNMENT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES

Sir—We hope that the communication from nine London correspondents of leading newspapers in four neutral European countries, published in your issue of August 16, will awaken the public to the widespread damage inflicted on our prestige not only in European countries but also in America by the policy of wholesale internment. Cruelty is inherent in it.

A 1940 letter to *The Times* attacking internment included H.G. Wells among the signatories

Plea for calm after PC is shot in city's spiralling gang war

BY KATE ALDERSON

A POLICE officer shot in his home by two masked gunmen may have been the victim of mistaken identity in a territory war between Liverpool drug gangs. The attack was the fifth shooting on Merseyside since Saturday.

Senior officers described the wounding as the "reckless, cowardly acts of barbarians" yesterday and appealed for calm across the city which last year recorded the nation's fastest-rising crime rate.

PC Stephen Hardy, 26, was asleep at home in West Derby, four miles from the city centre, with his girlfriend Caroline Kennedy and 12-month-old baby son when he was woken by a crashing noise downstairs. He believed he was being burgled but instead he was confronted by two gunmen and told to lie down on the bedroom floor. He was trying to dial 999 when both men opened fire with handguns. The officer was hit four times in the legs and arm.

The gunmen escaped from the modern cul-de-sac in a BMW car that was later found abandoned. PC Hardy, based at Marsh Lane police station, Bootle, had surgery at Liverpool's Fazakerley Hospital, where his condition was



Hardy: wounded four times at home

described as serious but stable. A man living on the estate said PC Hardy could have been the victim of a mistake; a known criminal lived in the area but had fled almost two weeks ago.

James Sharples, the chief constable, said PC Hardy had not been involved in any major crime investigation or large operation since he joined the force in 1993, and added: "There are a number of different lines of inquiry." Mr

Sharples said the spiralling gun violence of recent days had left him "desperately worried" and he warned criminals that they would be confronted with force by his officers.

"The behaviour by criminals in the city inevitably runs the risk of injury to innocent members of the public, as well as others. This will not be tolerated," he said.

Turf wars over the drug distribution business were believed to be behind many of the shooting incidents. Other factors, such as personality clashes, could also have triggered disputes.

The current spate of shootings began on Saturday, when three men were "kneecapped" after going drinking in a pub in Wavertree, two miles from the city centre. On Sunday a pregnant woman escaped unhurt after a house in Wavertree was sprayed with bullets in a drive-by shooting.

In the early hours of Tuesday morning, masked gunmen burst into two houses. Liam McGee, 18, was in bed with his girlfriend when he was shot in the legs four times in Anfield. A 24-year-old man was shot in the legs as he watched television in Bootle. Paul Stephenson, the assistant chief constable, described the

gunmen as cowardly barbarians and said that police were facing a "very fluid, volatile situation".

Police will also look into possible links between recent attacks and events that followed last May's shooting death of David Unger, 36, who was associated with a major gang in the Dingle/Toxeth area of Liverpool. There was an outbreak of tit-for-tat shootings as rival gangs battled for territory.

The power and wealth of the gangs was illustrated by Unger's funeral procession, which almost equalled the east London turnout for Ronnie Kray's burial. There were 31 black limousines for mourners and £12,000 behind the bar for the wake.

Recorded crime rose by 12 per cent last year and drug trafficking alone rose by 60 per cent. In the past 15 months there have been five murders, 53 wounding, and 432 armed robberies on the Liverpool streets.

Three or four drug networks are believed to have formed round criminal clans. A senior detective said: "These are long-established groups who once burgled and robbed banks. Now they are in drugs. You see them wearing a lot of gold and driving BMWs."

Student 'chose to die in library'

BY OLIVER AUGUST

A STUDENT killed himself in his favourite library while reading about death in the Greek classics. Richard Metcalf, 18, was found dead at Winchester College days after winning a place to read classics at Oxford University.

He surrounded himself with the works of Sophocles before taking a drug overdose and lying on a pile of cushions. His parents believe he was reading Sophocles's tragedy *Electra*, in which the heroine mourns the death of her father and her brother plots to kill their mother.

Richard's mother Carolyn, 41, decided to read *Electra* after her son's death to try to

understand him. She said: "Richard had spent many months reclassifying the college library. He felt secure there and maybe that's why he chose to die there. It may have been his way of leaving some sort of legacy and becoming a permanent part of the college."

His father Philip, 40, said: "We believe Richard felt so happy at college he did not want to leave. Even though he was a brilliant academic he may have been too sensitive to face the adult world."

The alarm was raised by a fellow pupil at the £13,000-a-year school and an empty pill bottle was discovered in a rubbish bin at the library.

The inquest at Winchester was told that the student had

taken an overdose of at least 39 Distalgic painkilling tablets last January but did not leave a suicide note.

Richard, who worked as a college librarian, was last seen by Peter Roberts, his housemaster, on the night before his death. Mr Roberts said: "He was very fond of the library. Each week he dealt with the catalogue for the library, which was used by a small number of boys to work. The last time I saw him was at 11pm in one of the college's towers when I went to lock up the doors."

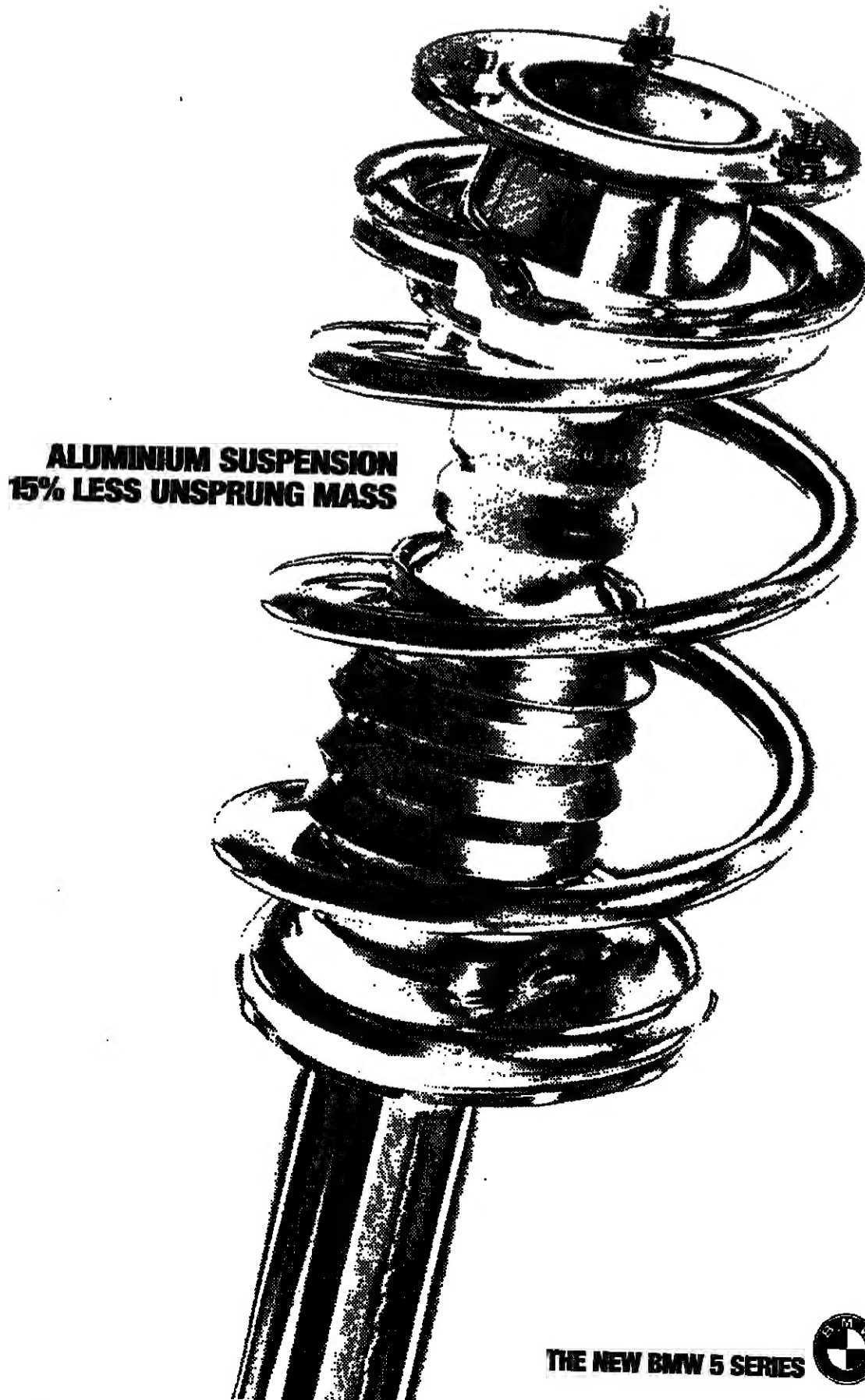
Richard had reorganised the small library at the top of the tower which caters for the school's 70 scholars. They had been asked by him to list the books they would like to have

bought. His death came just after he had won a guaranteed place to study classics at Merton College. This should have taken all academic pressure off him, Mr Roberts said.

But Richard had suffered from a serious depressive illness and had been prescribed anti-depressants in 1994, although Dr John Davies, Winchester College medical officer, said he seemed to be over the illness last summer.

Dr Davies said: "It was agreed his academic programme should be made lighter. By September 1995 he appeared to be very positive and at that stage was off all medication."

An open verdict was recorded.



ALUMINIUM SUSPENSION 15% LESS UNSPRUNG MASS

Duchess writes new future as marriage saga comes to end

BY EMMA WILKINS

THE Duchess of York is expected to trim her expenses, move into a converted stable block and take up her pen as a children's author again in order to make ends meet after her divorce.

With a modest sum of £500,000 awarded as part of her settlement, the Duchess is likely to exploit new markets in the Far East and America for her Budgie the Little Helicopter books and spin-off products.

Two new books about the adventures of a freckle-faced little princess will be published in America in October and further works are in the pipeline, according to publishing sources.

The financial future of Princesses Eugenie and Beatrice has been secured with a £1.4 million trust fund from the

Queen, but the Duchess will need to reduce her personal living costs. She may choose to move from her rented house in Wentworth, Surrey, which costs £72,000 a year, to Sunninghill Park, the Duke's Berkshire residence. It is understood that initial estimates for converting the stables to domestic use have been reduced by £300,000.

The move would have its financial advantages: electricity, water and gas could be provided by the Duke and the couple might be able to pool their staff. At the moment the Duchess spends £32,000 a month on a team of servants.

Some reports have suggested that the Duchess was desperate to continue to be known as Her Royal Highness, but one friend said she was better off without the title.

"It frees her to be able to go around the world, getting publicity for her work and making money without worrying if it is embarrassing to the Royal Family at home."

The Duchess can look forward to publication of *The Royal Switch* and *Bright Lights in America* in October. The stories feature Amanda, an 11-year-old red-haired princess, and Emily, a poor little rich girl from Manhattan. The pair travel the world doing good deeds and getting into scrapes. Some sources said the publishing deal with Bantam Doubleday included an advance payment of £300,000.

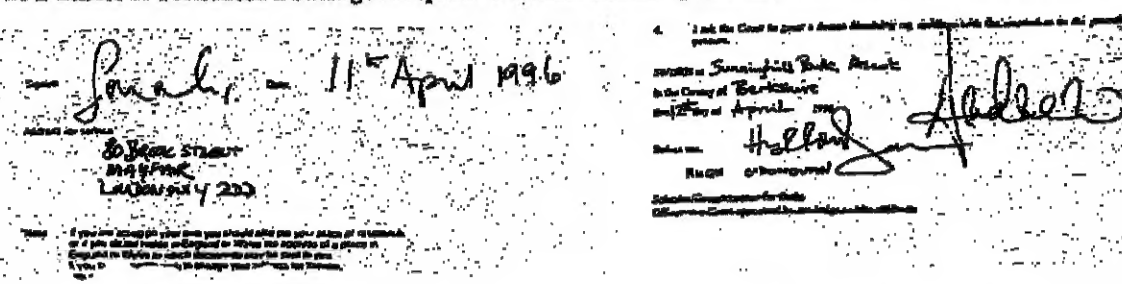
The books will sell at \$14.95 and merchandising is a possibility. "No formal merchandising deal has been made, but if the books are a success then it is certainly something that we would look at," a spokeswoman for Bantam Doubleday in New York said.

The Duchess's royalties from Budgie are expected to accelerate in the next few years. Fox Television has commissioned a fourth series of Budgie cartoons in a deal said to be worth £1.3 million. The little helicopter appears on merchandise from toys to mugs and t-shirts in more than 30 countries.

Sleepy Kids, the company which owns the worldwide animation and marketing rights for Budgie, made pre-tax profits of £973,000 for the



The Duchess of York faced a barrage of reporters and cameramen yesterday. Below: documents of the decree nisi



The Duchess was still wearing her wedding ring when she appeared in Switzerland yesterday

year to October 1995. The forecast for this year is a £1.17 million profit, but that includes profits for the company's other cartoon characters, such as Potsworth.

Sleepy Kids has always refused to disclose the Duchess's share of the profits, but most industry experts estimate it at 15 to 20 per cent.

The next market for the Duchess to exploit is the Far East, which is said to have enormous potential. Japan is a

bigger market than America for some cartoons and Thomas the Tank Engine is a great success in Tokyo.

The Duchess has recognised the potential of the Far East and is discussing ways of breaking into the market with businessmen in America and Hong Kong. David Tang, the Hong Kong Chinese multimillionaire, whose family fortune was founded with the Kowloon Bus Company, is a close friend and a committed sup-

porter of her work. It is understood that the Duchess's discussions with Ray Chambers, a New Jersey millionaire, and his associates have concentrated on his contacts in the Far East. The Duchess emerged from her meeting with Mr Chambers in January declaring that her financial problems, then said to include debts of up to £3 million, were over.

The subject of boyfriends remains a difficult issue for

the Duchess, who will never escape the embarrassment of her liaison with John Bryan, her so-called financial adviser. The Duchess's latest beau is said to be Thomas Muster, a muscular Austrian tennis player whose former girlfriend blamed her for the couple's break-up.

It seems likely that whatever her romantic and financial future, the Duchess's staunchest friend will remain the Duke.

A 'slight difference' in divorce court's day

BY FRANCES GIBB

JUDGE Angel's court rarely excites the interest of the media. On perhaps half a dozen occasions in his time as senior district judge in London's principal divorce registry has it been the centre of attention.

Those occasions, as yesterday, were the endings of royal marriages or those with royal associations. In 1995, sitting in court two, he read out the decree nisi of Camilla and Andrew Parker Bowles; in 1992 that of the Princess Royal and Captain Mark Phillips.

In general, however, the activities of the divorce registry go largely unnoticed. Each day there are the decrees to be announced in open court by Judge Angel or one of his 18 colleagues. After that, it is off with wigs and gowns and into chambers to hear the host of applications relating to the Children Act, financial settlements or procedural matters in any legal actions.

Apart from the royal decrees, Judge Angel made the headlines once before when, in 1991, he accused divorce lawyers of carrying out costly and useless inquiries into parties' finances. He urged action to prevent cases such as the one in which a couple started with £400,000 and spent "a quarter of their fortune to become poorer".

Yesterday Robin West, chief clerk in the family proceedings department of the registry, would admit only that the day had been "slightly different from the run of the mill."

High Court puts its seal of approval on the end of 58 broken dreams

BY STEPHEN FARRELL AND JOANNA BAILE

INFIDELITY, growing apart and concern for the children were among the causes given for 28 broken marriages listed in the High Court in London on the same day as the Duke and Duchess of York's.

Of 58 unhappy partners, the only one to appear in person at the three-minute hearing was Carlo Giambone, an unemployed mechanic and self-confessed adulterer from Notting Hill, London.

Mr Giambone, 28, objected to paying the costs of his wife's

petition from his £74 fortnightly benefit. Expecting an empty courtroom, he was bewildered to find the end of his seven-year marriage the subject of intense scrutiny.

He and his Greek-Cypriot wife Andrulla, like the Yorks, stay in contact because of their sons Kristos, aged six, and Mario, nine months. Neither ever expects to marry again.

They met in a nightclub in the West End of London in 1987, married at Fulham Register Office two years later and celebrated properly at a traditional ceremony in Cyprus.

The honeymoon over, they re-

turned to Britain to conditions very different from the Yorks, living in a dingy one-bedroom flat. "I had to sleep on the sofa, and my wife had a single bed in a bedroom that was no bigger than an ordinary bathroom. It took us two and a half years to get out of there, and by then things were not so good," he said.

Mr Giambone met another woman when his wife went on holiday in 1994, and he moved out. Of the Duke and Duchess's divorce he said: "I can see a lot of similarities between our break-ups in that we both have children and we both remain friends. When you

have got kids involved you have to be friends. They are so clever they can sense if there is any animosity between the two of you."

"I was surprised at all the attention. I didn't realise Andrew and Fergie were on the same list as me. It was a big surprise, all the fuss, and all I wanted was a quiet day."

Mrs Giambone, 28, a social worker, described the early days of the marriage as "brilliant", but said her husband soon began to miss his single life. "Although he was very good at caring for his son he was never there for me," she said. "Prior to last month I hated

him because I was very, very bitter at what he had done. But at the end of the day you have to have some kind of relationship for the sake of the children."

"Andy and Fergie will also know by now that you have to work at a marriage. But I married one man twice and I would never marry another man again."

Andrew Rothery, a London accountant working for Arthur Andersen, petitioned his wife Korina for a quickie divorce after moving out of the family home in Sidcup, southeast London, in November 1993. He now now lives in Lee, southeast London. Asked to state

briefly the reason for the separation, his affidavit said simply: "Very little time spent together due to work commitments, and we had no interests in common."

"It was difficult to agree on things and there were a lot of arguments. During November 1993 it became clear that neither of us was able to live happily together and it was unfair on the children to be surrounded by unhappiness, so we agreed to separate," the affidavit continued.

He yesterday refused to elaborate, insisting it was a private matter. "It is far too embarrassing to talk about."



Carlo Giambone: "All I wanted was a quiet day"

Brussels officials reaching for small print to defend beef ban

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN STRASBOURG AND MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE European Commission brushed off Britain's legal challenge to the export ban on its beef yesterday but Brussels officials privately admitted that aspects of their case might not stand up in the European Court.

John Major is expected to press Britain's demands for an early lifting of the ban with Jacques Santer, the president of the European Commission, when they meet in Moscow later this week at the G7 nuclear safety summit. Mr Major requested the meeting in a letter sent to Mr Santer on Tuesday night.

"Mr Santer is very happy to talk to Mr Major and is very open to an exchange of views," a Commission spokesman said. "I think other heads of Government may well be involved. Mr Major will be heard by Mr Santer, but the Commission's position has been made very clear. We have a ban for which there is a legal basis and it will be for the European Court of Justice to deal with that matter."

In London, Welsh farmers

said they would take up arms to protect their herds against further culling of their cattle if that was Europe's price for removing the ban.

Leading a 250-strong delegation to lobby MPs at Westminster, Bob Parry, the president of the Farmers' Union of Wales, declared: "The European Commission has said that British beef is safe to eat, so why are we suffering? Our farmers are willing to protect their animals by getting guns if it is necessary."

In Strasbourg, Lamberto Dini, the Italian prime minister, said the ban on British

beef exports should be lifted when the scientific evidence showed that it was safe to do so. "We want the ban removed as soon as possible," he said.

Franz Fischler, the European Agriculture Commissioner, precipitated the British legal challenge by his statement last weekend that he would have no hesitation in eating British beef and his admission that the ban had been imposed in response to consumer panic and not on health grounds.

Gerard Kiely, Herr Fischler's spokesman, said there would be no reconsideration of the ban until Britain

had presented detailed proposals for eradicating "mad cow" disease from the national cattle herd.

There is doubt about the legality of an embargo based on preserving public confidence and saving the EU beef industry from collapse. Article 129 of the Maastricht treaty covers consumer protection but it allows only for "action which supports and supplements the policy pursued by the Member states to protect the health, safety and economic interests of consumers." In an apparent reflection of this, the Commission yesterday said that public health was the central issue.

Legal experts were also combing the EU's founding treaties to justify the ban on exports to non-EU countries. Officials repeated that this was to protect consumers from the re-importation of suspect British beef.

□ In France, Philippe Vasseur, the agriculture minister, accused Britain of reneging on a commitment to carry out an extensive slaughter.

French farmers to be compensated

The French Government is to pay compensation to the owners of 76,000 calves of British origin quarantined on French farms in the wake of the "mad cow" scare. The French Agriculture Minister Philippe Vasseur said that the animals would be destroyed over the next two or three months. French authorities have refused to allow calves of British origin into the country since March 28, following the British government's admission of a possible link between BSE and CJD.

BSE deaths 'could be two million'

BY MICHAEL HORNSBY

A LEADING scientist alarmed and bewildered MPs yesterday with a barrage of statistics suggesting that the number of deaths from eating meat infected with "mad cow" disease could be as few as 10 or more than two million.

Dr Stephen Dealler, a consultant medical microbiologist, described the upper figure as "a worst-case scenario". He also said that the risk from eating beef now with new safeguards in place, was "absolutely minimal".

Dr Dealler offered the estimate at a joint session of the Commons Agriculture and Health Select committees called to consider the latest evidence on BSE and Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, the counterpart condition in humans. Others giving evidence included Sir Kenneth Calman, the Government's Chief Medical Officer. Mr

Keith Meldrum, the Chief Veterinary Officer, and Professor John Pattison, head of the Government's advisory committee on BSE.

When Edward Leigh, Conservative MP for Gainsborough and Horncastle, and a self-professed beef-eater, pressed Dr Dealler to say what his own chances of contracting CJD from BSE-infected meat were, Dr Dealler replied, to laughter: "Between zero and 100 per cent."

Professor Pattison told the MPs that Dr Dealler's figures represented the "possible range of what might happen", but added: "The longer we go on without a significant rise in the number of CJD cases, the greater the chance that [the number of deaths caused by BSE] will be at the low end of the range. I do not think the risk is as high as Dr Dealler thinks. It would be very sur-

prising if there is no species barrier between cows and human beings. It would also be very surprising if [BSE] infection is ever found in muscle meat [as opposed to offal]."

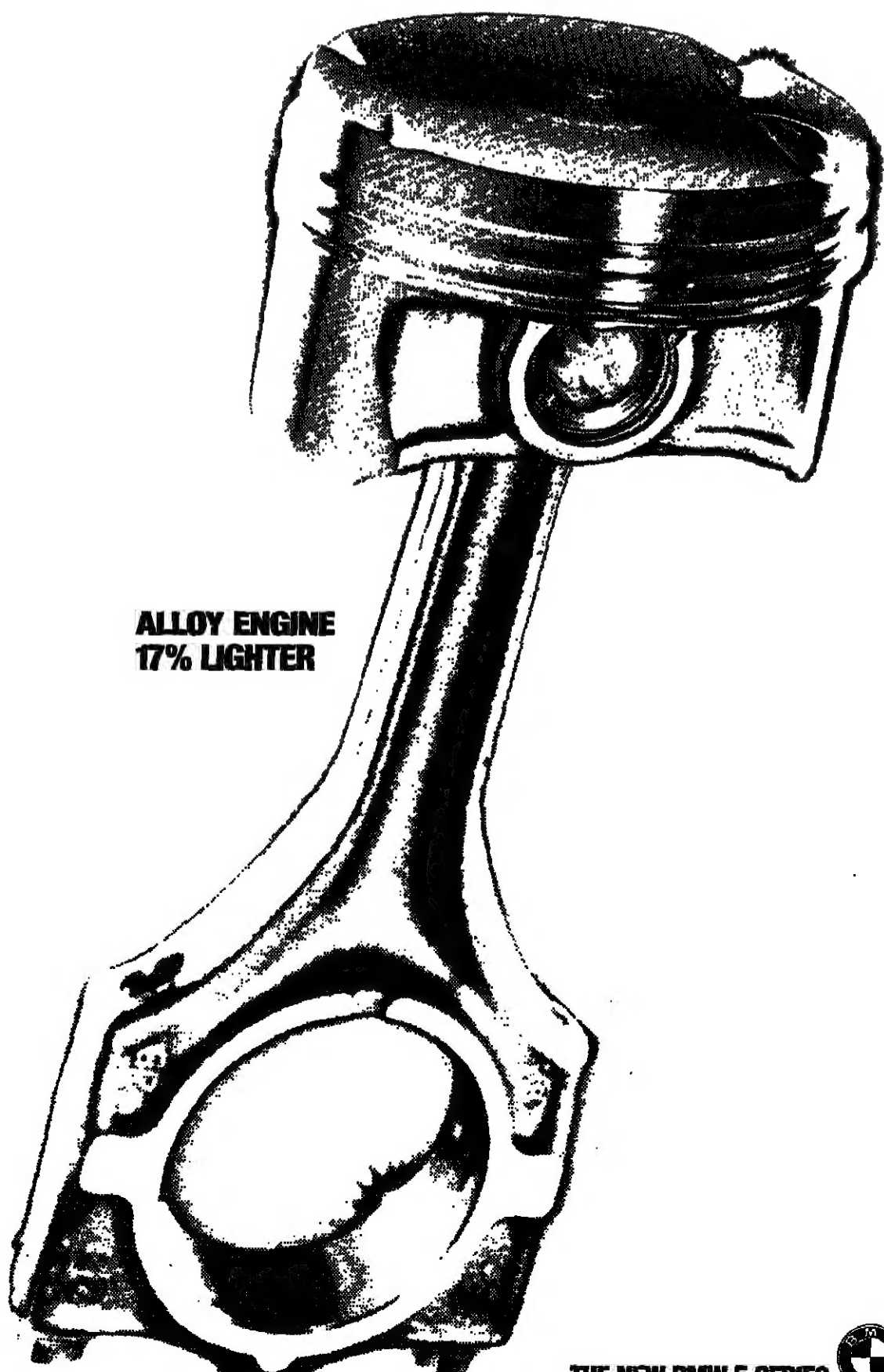
Dr Dealler said he had arrived at his estimates by looking at the potential times when people might have become infected and the number of infected cattle likely to have entered the food chain each year. He assumed that no one would have been infected after November, 1989, when the offal ban took effect.

The committee also heard evidence from Dr Harash Narang, a clinical virologist who formerly worked for the Public Health Laboratory Service in Newcastle upon Tyne, who claims to have made a breakthrough in developing a test to detect BSE in the urine of live cattle. Dr Narang, who

repeatedly clashed with Sir Kenneth and Mr Meldrum over his claims that the Government had obstructed his research, said: "The urine test, used on farms, could eradicate any remaining BSE by identifying cattle with the disease so that they could be removed."

The value of such a test is that it would avoid the need to destroy thousands of healthy animals merely to eliminate those with BSE. At present the disease can be confirmed definitively in cattle only by analysis of brain tissue after death.

Mr Meldrum said Dr Narang had failed to produce any evidence that his test worked. Sir Kenneth said Dr Narang's research had been taken seriously, but other scientists who had looked at earlier work of his on detecting nemavirus in brain tissue had been unable to repeat his experiments.



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Howard 'misused power' on Bulger killers' sentence

BY CAROL MIDGLEY

MICHAEL HOWARD misused his powers and pandered to popular public outrage when he ordered that the schoolboy killers of James Bulger be detained for at least 15 years, the High Court was told yesterday.

The Home Secretary "erred in law" by treating Jon Venables and Robert Thompson, then aged ten, as if they were adults when he increased their minimum sentence from ten to 15 years, taking no account of social and psychiatric reports.

Edward Fitzgerald, QC, for Venables, said Mr Howard had also used a petition with more than 370,000 names organised by the Bulger family and thousands of letters from the public calling for a longer sentence as a basis for his decision. "A judge would throw them in the bin if he received a series of petitions from the public saying, 'When you sentence so and so, make sure you give him 15 years,'" Mr Fitzgerald said. "What judge in the kingdom would say, 'I am going to pass a sentence of 15 years on a child



Lawyers for Thompson, left, and Venables say the Home Secretary did not consider their welfare

without social or psychiatric reports?"

Lawyers for the boys, who admitted abducting two-year-old James and murdering him beside a railway line in Merseyside in 1993, are seeking a judicial review of the Home Secretary's decision.

Mr Fitzgerald told Lord Justice Pill, sitting with Mr Justice Newman, that there was no challenge to the correctness of the convictions or the sentence that both boys be

detained at Her Majesty's pleasure. The juveniles, now 12 and held at a secure unit in northern England, accepted responsibility "for the tragic death of their victim". But Mr Howard had wrongly exercised his discretion in requiring the boys to first serve a period of 15 years "to satisfy the requirements of retribution and general deterrence".

Mr Fitzgerald said the Home Secretary had misdirected himself that there was

no difference between a sentence of detention during Her Majesty's pleasure, imposed on juveniles, and a mandatory life term given to adult murderers. This was contrary to the tradition of every civilised country that children should be treated differently to adults.

The QC accused Mr Howard of taking over the classic judicial function of sentencing. "No other country would have a situation such as this where a child as young as ten can have a punitive sentence imposed by a politician," he said.

After their trial at Preston Crown Court, Mr Justice Morland recommended that Venables and Thompson be detained for a minimum of eight years. He said that eight years was "very, very many years for a ten-year-old. They are now children, then they will be young men." Lord Taylor of Gossforth, the Lord Chief Justice, increased the minimum to ten years before Mr Howard's decision. In the letter announcing the increase, Mr Howard made no mention of the boys' welfare or rehabilitation. Mr Fitzgerald told the court.

The case continues.



Wendy Jacobs with some of her new charges at Ewelme school yesterday

New head ends 550 years of tradition

BY JOHN O'LEARY

WENDY JACOBS has swept away more than 500 years of tradition by landing the headship of Britain's oldest primary school. Mrs Jacobs, 34, a mother of two, is the first headmistress of Ewelme Primary School, in Oxfordshire, since its foundation in 1437.

The picturesque village school, with 40 pupils and two staff, claims the longest pedigree in primary education. Founded by Chaucer's granddaughter, teaching still takes place in the original buildings, beside a medieval church and almshouses.

Mrs Jacobs's appointment fulfils a career-long ambition. She first visited the school as a student at Reading University and was immediately drawn to the job when it fell vacant.

Barbara Blackley, who chairs the governors, said they had not hesitated to break with tradition. "It was obvious that Mrs Jacobs had very high standards and any children who are taught by her will be very lucky."

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Policemen save woman declared dead by doctor

BY PAUL WILKINSON

TWO policemen told yesterday of their shock when the leg of a woman pronounced dead by her doctor suddenly sprang to life. "I saw the left leg twitch and jump in the air and I was scared stiff," said PC Kevin Smith.

Last night Maureen Jones, 59, a diabetic mother of four grown-up children, was recovering in Scarborough Hospital after her ordeal. Dr Marion Meeson, her doctor, a GP with 16 years' experience, declined to comment.

PC Smith, 31, said the undertaker's hearse was already at the cottage in the Yorkshire Wolds village of Thwing, near Driffield, when he arrived last Monday night with PC Philip Shrimpton.

They went into the bedroom where Mrs Jones was lying face down on the floor. PC Shrimpton went to comfort relatives in the house when his colleague called him back to the bedroom.

PC Shrimpton, 36, said: "It was a frightening experience. To all intents Mrs Jones was pronounced dead and because of what happened we had to call into use our medical training." They gave her the kiss of life and applied heart massage. Mrs Jones was put into the recovery position until paramedics arrived.

No one had seen Mrs Jones, a widow, since the night

before and it was only when her son Nigel, 33, a shepherd, called at her home in the evening that he found her collapsed in an apparent diabetic coma. He called Dr Meeson at her surgery in Hunmanby three miles away and she turned out immediately.

But soon after her arrival, Dr Meeson, who qualified at the University of Wales in 1980, declared Mrs Jones dead and advised her son to report the incident to the police as a sudden death.

Mr Jones said his mother could remember only going to bed on Sunday night and waking up in hospital.



Maureen Jones: she remembered nothing

WPC 'lost' eight years after arresting youth

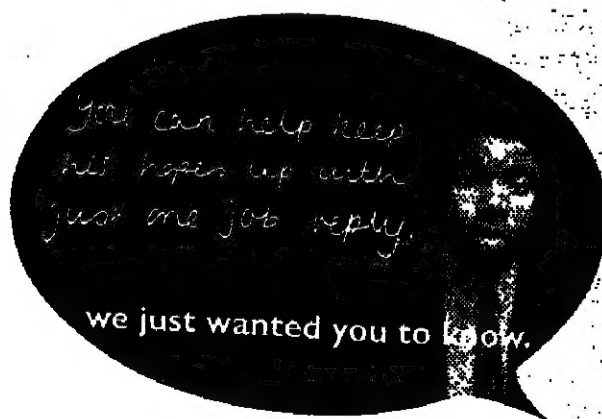
A POLICEWOMAN lost all memory of the previous eight years after she was injured while arresting a drunken youth, a court was told yesterday. WPC Gaynor Whinton, 28, even forgot she was the mother of a two-year-old girl.

Stephen James, for the prosecution at Ilkerton Youth Court in Derbyshire, said WPC Whinton had a large bump on her head after helping colleagues to arrest the 17-year-old youth last June. In hospital she could not remember her name.

After the case WPC Whinton, who is still having

treatment for amnesia, said the injury had had a devastating effect on her life. She was particularly upset at losing precious memories of her first two years of motherhood. "Rebecca is three in June. I can remember seeing her in hospital when she was brought to see me. It was odd seeing her because I didn't feel like I was her mother because I didn't remember having her. If I could remember anything, I would remember that."

The teenager pleaded guilty to assault while resisting arrest and was given four months' youth custody.



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Labour and Tories take aim in battle for town hall rule

BY JAMES LANDALE
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE two main parties opened their council election campaigns yesterday by trading insults and contradictory statistics about their respective records in local government.

After last week's by-election defeat, the Tories face the prospect of a further drubbing in what will be the last and most important test of popular support before the general election. They could lose as many as 500 of the 1,100 council seats they are defending on May 2.

All these seats were won just after the Tories' 1992 general election victory, when they polled 45 per cent of the vote, about 15 per cent ahead of Labour. Support for the Government has since dropped to just 28 per cent.

"We are going from a high in 1992," a Tory source said. "In a way, that is coming back and walloping us now."

However, opposition parties and election experts are playing down the prospect of a repeat of last year's Tory wipeout — when the party lost 2,000 seats — because this year's election is much smaller. In all, about 3,000 seats in 150 authorities are being contested: a third of the seats in 100 shire district authorities, 36 metropolitan district authorities and one unitary authority, Hartlepool. The 13 new shadow unitary authorities, which take over from present councils in April 1997, will hold elections for all their seats. There are no elections in London, Scotland or Wales.

As Labour and the Tories launched their campaigns yes-

KEY CONTESTS

□ The four Tory councils in the election: Huntingdonshire in the Prime Minister's constituency, Broxbourne in Hertfordshire, Macclesfield in Cheshire and Runnymede in Surrey.

□ Three hung councils targeted by the Liberal Democrats: Tunbridge Wells in Kent, Wokingham in Berkshire and Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire.

□ The former Tory stronghold of Basildon in Essex, now a hung council.

□ The shadow unitary authority of Brighton and Hove. Labour won Hove Borough Council last year.

terday, both parties refused to give detailed predictions of their chances. But Tony Blair, the Labour leader, said his party's "success on May 2 will be another blow to a weak and incompetent Government".

Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, admitted: "There is certainly a challenge facing the party. I have made no secret of that."

A key Tory charge during the campaign will be that voters pay 50 per cent higher council taxes under Labour-controlled authorities. Dr Mawhinney said that in Band D houses, valued between £68,000 and £88,000, Labour charged £225 more than Tory councils. Liberal Democrat councils charged £139 more in the same band.

Frank Dobson, the Shadow Environment Secretary, dismissed the claim. He said that in the 39 councils that Labour won last year, the average

council tax rise was 6 per cent, well below the Government's forecast of 8 per cent. He also cited figures backed by the Audit Commission showing that the average council tax charged by Tory authorities was £536, compared with the £513 figure for Labour. "The Tories will seek to blame Labour for the council tax increases but local people know that the Government must shoulder most of the blame," he said.

Labour's campaign will focus on the quality of services, value for money and partnership between private and public sectors that the party says is provided by its authorities. Mr Blair said: "The people have lost their trust in the Government. I am confident that the local elections will show that people are placing their trust in new Labour."

The tenor of what will be a bitter campaign was evident when the Tories used piles of baked-bean tins to illustrate the higher council taxes in opposition authorities. Labour, the Tories said, were "has-beens" and the Liberal Democrats were "half-baked".

Dr Mawhinney said: "We, however, are full of beans." Ron Watson, chairman of the Tories' national local government advisory committee, said he saw a new determination among Tory activists to fight the elections hard. They would highlight the difference between Labour's national image and the reality they saw on the ground, where the trade unions were still dominant. "Most Labour councillors are unreconstructed socialists," he said.

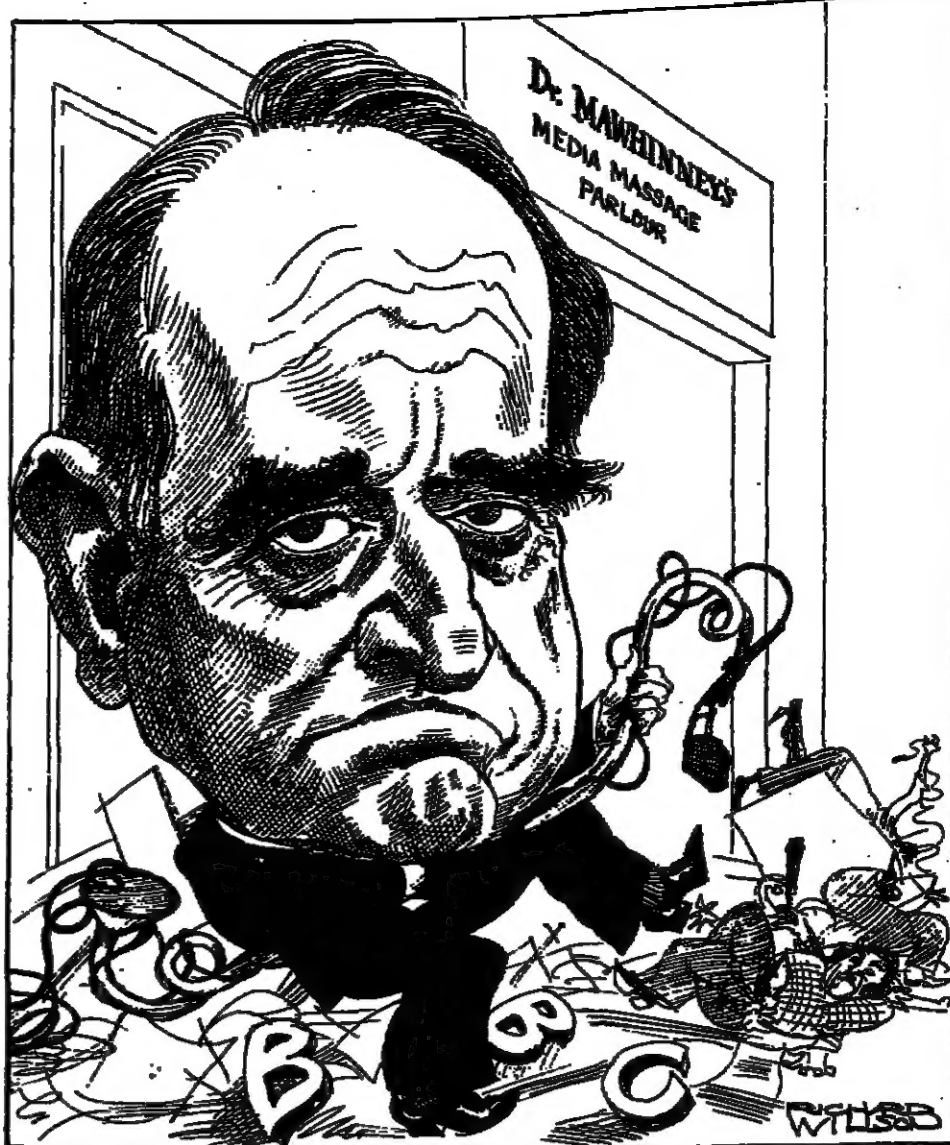
Photograph, page 24

This is no way to win back the voters

Brian Mawhinney's attack on Sue MacGregor on the *Today* programme yesterday was unjustified, exaggerated and, even worse, politically inept. But that is symptomatic of the nervousness and stridency among some at Conservative Central Office. They are adopting the wrong approach to win back the many voters who have deserted the Tories since the last election. Dr Mawhinney's outburst also ensured that attention was distracted from a highly significant raising of the standard of traditional Labour values by Robin Cook.

Attacking the *Today* programme is an easy, and shallow, way to win applause from Tory loyalists, who suspect the BBC and many of its interviewers of being dedicated to doing down the Government. But not only is it ludicrous to regard the scrupulously fair Ms MacGregor in this light, but her question drawing a parallel with 1990 and asking whether the Tories now needed to take similarly drastic action was entirely fair. Of course, John Major is not about to be "dumped", and, unlike a year ago, there is no speculation about the leadership now. It would be suicidal of the Tories even to contemplate such a coup. But Dr Mawhinney was wrong to regard the question as "sneaky" as if the issue is not politically relevant.

Of course, his attack is part of an elaborate exercise of trying to influence the broadcasters, and especially the BBC. Tory officials feel Labour secures more favourable coverage by constantly intervening with executives and programme editors. Labour certainly puts pressure on the broadcasters, but I do not



RIDDELL ON POLITICS

in 1963-64, while the Major Government is unfashionable.

The Tory faithful in the shires and the suburbs who believe that the media, and the BBC in particular, are being unfair to them will cheer Dr Mawhinney. They will feel he is speaking up for Middle England Tories. But making your core supporters feel good, or at least self-satisfied, is not the way to win elections. The Tories need to appeal to the uncommitted and they will not do that by stridency. Sounding reasonable rather than aggressive is the way to win back former supporters.

Such attacks underline the impression of a party that is in a jittery mood after the Staffordshire South-East by-election and ahead of the local elections in a fortnight. Even in the short-term, Dr Mawhinney's outburst was counter-productive — and was

seen as such by some other senior Tories — not least since it diverted attention from Mr Cook's speech to the Scottish TUC conference.

Mr Cook will be one of the most powerful figures in any Labour Government and, yesterday, he signalled that the party's traditional concerns with poverty and equality had not been forgotten. Nothing he said could justify stories about a split with Mr Blair. There is no difference on the details of policy. But the tone was very different from, say, Mr Blair's speech in New York a week ago. Mr Cook talked about trade union rights and public services in language that the Labour leader now does not use.

If Mr Blair is claiming the centre ground, Mr Cook is securing the left wing. But despite Mr Major's comments last night, the Tories seem mainly concerned with their right wing — forgetting that it is the centre which they have to reclaim.

PETER RIDDELL

Lib Dems predict strong showing

BY JAMES LANDALE

THE Liberal Democrats are predicting further gains in Tory heartlands at next month's local election.

Party officials say they have a good chance of winning control of town halls in Tunbridge Wells in Kent, Wokingham in Berkshire and Stratford-upon-Avon. The party needs to win only a handful of seats to take control of each of the three hung councils.

Andrew Stunell, political secretary to the Association of Liberal Democrat Councils, said the party could add four councils to the 51 that it already controls. "We are set to take places which in the English mind are Conservative beyond recall. Disgusted of Tunbridge Wells could well become a Liberal Democrat."

The party, which is defending 450 seats, could do this with just the 50 to 100 extra seats that he expected it to gain. Mr Stunell also said that John Major could see the loss of Tory-controlled Huntingdonshire in his own constituency. Of the 13 councils still controlled by the Tories, only four hold elections on May 2. The other three are Runnymede in Surrey, Macclesfield in Cheshire and Broxbourne in Hertfordshire.

However, Mr Stunell was cautious about predictions of huge Tory losses. Although the Tories would lose 550 of the 1,100 seats they are defending if the electorate votes as it did last year, he believes that Tory supporters who have previously abstained will vote this time. "Even if their team is about to be relegated, they will go to the last match," he said.

Paddy Ashdown was confident the Liberal Democrats would strengthen their position as the second party of local government. The party leader said the Liberal Democrats had put "a breath of fresh air in Britain's town halls" and now run four times as many councils as the Tories. Their election document, *Putting Principles into Practice*, was a manifesto for greater democracy, better education and care for the environment.

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Short tells investors to be wary of rail sell-off

BY ANDREW PIERCE
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

TORY attempts to embarrass Clare Short over her support for higher taxes for middle-income earners fizzled out yesterday. Only a dozen Tory MPs were in the chamber for the Shadow Transport Secretary's first Commons speech since being criticised by Labour spin-doctors.

Ms Short, opening a debate on the sale of Railtrack, took the sparsely attended Tory benches by surprise when she declared: "I would like to say a word on tax."

To cheer from her own back benches, she said: "The cost of privatising the railways amounts to an extra £106.38 for every taxpayer in the country. This is equal to an extra 1p on the basic rate of income tax."

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, compared Ms Short with Harriet Harman, the Shadow Health Secretary, who had defied Labour policy by sending her son to a grammar school. He said: "The one is endorsed for acting like a Tory, the other rebuked for speaking like a socialist."

Ms Short urged wavering Tory MPs to support Labour's



Short: survived Tory taunts over tax row

amendment calling on the halt of the sale in the first test of the Government's strength since its majority was reduced to one. She said that potential investors should be aware that a Labour government would use the regulator to impose controls on railway investment and asset disposal. "The use of regulation to protect the national interest will change the likely rate of return to shareholders."

Brian Wilson, a Labour transport spokesman, referred to a leaked letter on April 2 from John Welsby, the British Rail chairman, who said that the prospectus was "misleading and deficient". No alter-

ation had been made. Mr Wilson said: "A Stock Exchange inquiry is required to find what the truth of the matter is."

Sir George said that the directors of Railtrack had a duty to ensure that the prospectus was in accordance with the facts. "I'm confident that the prospectus which issues on May 1 will fully satisfy those requirements."

He was scornful of Labour's alternative to privatisation, higher investment without saying where the money would come from. "Perhaps from higher taxes on MPs? Under a privatised railway, the costs of funding the investment will no longer fall on the taxpayer. Privatisation would reverse decades of decline. "It's a win-win situation."

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: backbench debates; trade and industry questions; rail privatisation. In the Lords: Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations) Bill; Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill; committee: Disabled Persons and Carers; Short-term Breeds Bill, second reading.

TODAY in the Commons: questions to Treasury ministers and the Deputy Prime Minister, standing in for John Major; Northern Ireland (Entry to Negotiations) Bill; second reading; backbench debates on the Commonwealth Institute, the Lords: Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Bill, report; Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Bill, committee.

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SATURDAY
IN THE TIMES



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Frances Bissell on cross-cultural cooking

Derwent May on good news for bird lovers

How to win a Philippe Starck chair

New research backs syndrome claims by Gulf War veterans

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A COMBINATION of chemicals used to protect soldiers from nerve gas and desert insects during the 1991 war with Iraq could have caused neurological damage, according to new research into the so-called Gulf War syndrome.

Gulf War veterans in Britain said yesterday the American research was the "next step" towards providing conclusive proof of the existence of a war-related syndrome.

The possible explanation for sicknesses suffered by thousands of British and American Gulf War veterans follows research into the effects of a cocktail of chemicals on chickens. The researchers found that although individual doses of the chemicals had no side effects, even in far larger amounts than those given to soldiers, when administered together they proved highly toxic.

The combination of two pesticides, DEET and permethrin, and the anti-nerve gas agent pyridostigmine bromide, caused neurological problems in the chickens similar to the symptoms found in around 30,000 American Gulf War veterans. The symptoms include memory loss, headaches, fatigue, muscle and joint pain, shortness of breath and tremors.

The research by scientists at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Centre in Dallas, is being presented this week at the Federation of American Societies of Experimental Biology and will be published next month in the *Journal of Toxicology and Environmental Health*.

Dr Mohamed Abou-Donia, a pharmacologist at Duke University, said that the chemicals were used to protect the soldiers from diseases such as malaria and leishmaniasis, which could have caused thousands of deaths.

However, he said: "It appears that, for some veterans, the precautions prevented one set of problems and created another. Now our task is to analyse the veterans' symptoms by investigating all the potential causes, not only for their sakes but for the welfare of future soldiers."

Dr Abou-Donia admitted the study on chickens did not prove the chemical cocktail affected people. However, his partners at the University of Texas had carried out epidemiological studies on soldiers which were consistent with the animal data, he said. The Texas scientists declined to release their results until the research was published.

The Gulf Veterans' Association in Britain said the Ministry of Defence had so far failed to carry out specific research and had merely completed a clinical study. A spokeswoman added that the committee of experts brought in to pursue further studies did not include a neurologist.



BBC producer Ric Blaxill with newcomer Bear van Beers, who bombarded him with calls and videos

Bear cheek takes unknown straight to the top

A MODEL from Holland is to present the TV chart show *Top of the Pops* tonight after months of bombarding a BBC producer with phone calls, faxes and videos of her work (Alexandra Frean writes). She is the first "unknown" to host the 32-year-old programme.

Bear van Beers, 23, has appeared in a number of commercials and minor Dutch TV shows, but said it had been her life-long ambition to appear on *Top of the Pops*: "I have watched it ever since I was a little girl. I love it."

The programme's producer, Ric Blaxill, finally decided to give her a chance after tonight's scheduled presentation, Lisa l'Anson, had to pull out. "I could tell she had the attitude, looks, intelligence and personality," he said. "When I called her home in Holland she couldn't believe it." Miss van Beers speaks four languages, studied journalism in Los Angeles and is studying film and television arts in Amsterdam.

Stand-in sheriff dismisses 'trivial' Skye toll offences

By GILLIAN BOWDITCH, SCOTLAND CORRESPONDENT

SKYE BRIDGE protesters who pleaded guilty to non-payment of tolls were admonished yesterday and let off by a sheriff who told them that their offences were so trivial that they did not merit an appearance in his court.

Sheriff Ian Cameron, standing in for Sheriff James Fraser at Dingwall Sheriff Court, told 170 protesters that their cases should really be heard in the lower district court. He said he was not interested in the political aspects of the case but only in the criminality of the non-payment.

His leniency surprised the protesters, who had been told by Sheriff Fraser that each non-payment of the £4.30 toll would attract a £30 fine.

Sheriff Cameron told Allan MacDonald, 63, a retired Skye headmaster: "These are trivial sums involved. It's a bit like the non-payment of TV licences but not so serious."

He admonished Mr MacDonald on all three offences. Twelve others who pleaded guilty got the same lenient treatment. Most of the protesters maintained their not-guilty pleas at the intermediate hearing. They will be summoned for trial next month.

The protesters have campaigned vigorously against the tolls for the £25 million bridge, which was opened in October and funded by the private sector. Some have crossed the bridge on dozens of occasions without paying.

The charges against them have been brought under the New Roads and Streets Act 1991 and carry a maximum penalty of £1,000 per offence, or a jail sentence.

One protester, Andy Anderson, 57, from Skye, has already been fined £150 after being found guilty of five offences by Sheriff Fraser. He has appealed to the High Court in Edinburgh.

The protesters had been angered by a decision to summon them in person to the court for them to reaffirm their pleas but yesterday Sheriff Cameron only laughed when he heard that one protester had been unable to keep the appointment.

After the hearing, Myrna Scott Moncrieff, who is leading the protest, said: "I am surprised at the outcome. I'm glad the rest of us stood firm and resisted the temptation to plead guilty and get off with only being admonished. However, Sheriff Cameron seems like a very reasonable man."

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'Apologise or quit' call to heritage chief who mocked patrons

BY DALYA ALBERGE
ARTS CORRESPONDENT



Sir Hugh, left, and Sir Jocelyn: knock-on effect

AN eminent figure in the art world yesterday urged Virginia Bottomley to seek the resignation of Sir Jocelyn Stevens as chairman of English Heritage unless he apologised publicly for mocking patrons of London's Kenwood House as "people with too much time".

Sir Hugh Leggitt expressed outrage that Sir Jocelyn had insulted people who selflessly devoted themselves to the nation's heritage. He said: "He's behaved disgracefully."

Sir Hugh is a former commissioner for the Museums and Galleries Commission, and honorary adviser to the national portrait galleries of England and Scotland. He was responding to comments made last Sunday by Sir Jocelyn after the Friends of Kenwood House expressed concern that English Heritage had neglected its responsibilities for the historic building on Hampstead Heath. They called for a full-time curator to be reinstated, arguing that one of the nation's most important collections of Old Masters, including works by Vermeer and Rembrandt, set in a Robert Adam interior, needed full-time attention.

Hours after a unanimous motion was passed by the Friends, Sir Jocelyn dismissed them as troublemakers with "too much spare time", and added: "We don't actually

need the Friends if they're going to behave like this."

Yesterday Sir Hugh said that it was "very distasteful" of Sir Jocelyn to have singled out Lord Hutchinson, QC, and George Levy, a leading antiques dealer, who are respected throughout the art world for their passionate commitment to heritage.

Sir Jocelyn attacked them as "people with plenty of spare time" who "have got used to the impression that they run Kenwood" and said: "The Friends are not behaving like friends. They are behaving in a very aggressive manner."

The family of Edward Cecil Guinness, the 1st Earl of Iveagh (1847-1927), who bequeathed the collection to the nation, is known to be "very upset and deeply concerned about the way that Kenwood is being run. Sir Hugh said: "He shouldn't have attacked the very people who care so

much. Even if he does have a difference of opinion, he should talk about it. Unless he apologises, the Minister should ask him to resign. It is Virginia Bottomley's job to oversee such matters."

Beyond Kenwood, he said, Sir Jocelyn's remarks could do untold damage to the voluntary sector on which every arts institute relies heavily. "It isn't just Kenwood he's letting down. It is so difficult raising funds. These institutions desperately need Friends. Hundreds of people up and down the country give their services and their cash to help the national, local authority and university institutions. They need to be encouraged, not discouraged. Such comments have a knock-on effect."

"Gratuitous public criticism from the chairman of English Heritage is both shocking and counter-productive. As chairman of such an important quango, an immediate public apology is vital."

The Heritage Minister should not only dissociate herself from Sir Jocelyn's aggressive remarks, but make it clear that the Government is wholly supportive of individuals who give so much to help preserve our national patrimony."

A spokeswoman for English Heritage said: "We don't feel there is anything for the chairman to apologise about."

Diary, page 20



A computer-created view from Lambeth Bridge of how the giant £10 million Ferris wheel would look

Traditionalists try to put a spoke in London's millennium wheel

BY JONATHAN PRYNN

TRADITIONALISTS and modernists from the architectural world clashed yesterday over the proposed siting of a 500ft Ferris wheel on the South Bank in London to celebrate the millennium.

Plans for the £10 million structure were condemned by Lord St John of Fawsley, chairman of the Royal Fine Arts Commission, as "wholly unsuitable" for the riverside location, almost opposite the Palace of Westminster.

He said: "The 500ft-diameter wheel will be a third as high again as the Shell Centre, virtually twice the height of Big Ben and approximately the height of the British Telecom Tower. It would have a damaging visual impact on the Royal Parks,

the surrounding Grade I listed buildings and the World Heritage Site of Westminster Abbey and the House of Parliament."

However, two of Britain's most distinguished architects, Sir Richard Rogers and Sir Norman Foster, and the designer Sir Terence Conran were positive. Sir Terence said: "Cities need big symbols and the wheel seems to have all the fizz that the millennium is supposed to have."

Detailed plans for the wheel, described as London's Eiffel Tower, were unveiled yesterday by British Airways, which is sponsoring the project and putting more than £600,000 into the scheme.

The wheel, which will be the highest of its kind in the world, would dominate the central London skyline from

its Jubilee Gardens site close to the South Bank arts centre. It would carry up to 2,500 passengers an hour at £5 a head in 60 enclosed capsules passing within yards of the site of a new luxury hotel being developed at the front of County Hall, the former GLC headquarters. From the top of the 20-minute ride, passengers would be able to see for 30 miles, from Luton in the north to Tunbridge Wells in the south. It would dominate the riverscape for at least five years before being moved to a new site.

Sir Jocelyn Stevens, chairman of English Heritage, gave his blessing to the project but said the wheel should be moved away from County Hall so that it did not impede the view of the Grade II listed building. The

planning committee of Lambeth Borough Council is unlikely to meet to consider the application before June. The final decision is likely to rest with the Secretary of State for the Environment.

David Marks and Julia Barfield, the architects behind the project, hope to start work on the wheel before the end of the year with an opening ceremony in April 1999. More than half the energy to drive the ride could be generated by tidal power from turbines in the Thames. The steel structure has been designed to withstand winds as strong as any recorded in London over the past hundred years.

Bob Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, said: "It will be for the millennium what the Crystal Palace was for the 1851 Great Exhibition."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Pilot held after drugs discovered

The pilot of a light aircraft whose passenger was critically injured by its propeller after an emergency landing has been arrested on suspicion of smuggling drugs. The Cheetah aircraft, flying from Holland to Gloucestershire on Tuesday, came down in a field near Basingstoke, Hampshire. A box containing 20kg of cannabis worth £60,000 was found near by. Customs officials could not say if the two events were connected.

Burns boy dies

A three-year-old boy, who survived for two months after suffering 94 per cent burns, has died. Adam McKelvie was found inside his burnt-out home in Corby, Northamptonshire, on February 10. His mother died in the blaze.

Fraud charge

Inspector David Currie, 36, and Tracey Kember, 24, a police worker, from Gravesend, denied conspiracy to defraud Sainsbury's by allegedly tendering outdated vouchers. Bail for both was continued by Maidstone Crown Court.

Inquest refused

A coroner has refused a full inquest into the deaths of six crew of a trawler that sank off Cornwall in 1991. He said all the evidence was aired when one of the *Pescado's* operators was cleared and another convicted of manslaughter.

Driver's plunge

A motorist drove to his death over the 80ft Marsden Bay cliffs on south Tyneside after apparently phoning police to say he was going to jump. Officers saw a car speed over the edge into the sea. A man's body was later recovered.

Line of inquiry

A signalling error has been blamed for an electric InterCity train with 200 passengers being stranded for 83 minutes on a non-electrified line outside Basingstoke, Hampshire, on Tuesday. Rail-track is holding an inquiry.

Jurors warned

Mr Justice Curtis warned jurors at the Old Bailey to ignore extensive media reports over the death of Stephen Lawrence, 18, whose parents have brought a private murder prosecution against three men. The trial continues.

Talked out

Gary Jacobs, a lawyer who hosted a Sunday night show on Talk Radio, has resigned after being asked to include advice on gardening, DIY and motoring. His departure comes after that of Simon Bates and Jonathan King.

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Sell-off revives Church assets

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Church of England has sold buildings worth millions of pounds to repair the damage done by property speculation in the 1950s.

The sales, and a tightly controlled investment strategy, mean the Church has almost fully recovered from its £800 million losses on the property market.

The MetroCentre in Gateshead has been sold for an £80 million profit, as well as the Marlows shopping centre in Hertfordshire and Beechwood Place in Cheltenham. In America the Commissioners, who manage the Church's assets, have sold office buildings and development land for more than took value.

The sales, disclosed in the annual report for 1995, illustrate that the Commissioners are fulfilling their pledge to increase investments in stocks and shares at the expense of property. Total asset value

increased by £300 million in 1995 to £2.7 billion. Property assets fell from 58 to 39 per cent of the total.

Last year the Commissioners sold 2,957 acres of land in Britain for £22.8 million, of which more than half was development land. Residential sales totalled £15.9 million, mainly long leases on its Hyde Park estate in London. One hundred and nine vicarages were sold, a slight decline on 1994.

Many acres of glebe land, managed by dioceses and usually rented out, were also sold, generating £16.6 million. However, £6.6 million was reinvested in glebe land and £2 million in clergy housing. A further £25.8 million was raised by selling redundant churches and sites. The Commissioners reported a "short-term" fall in net income, from £145.2 million in 1994 to £137.4 million.

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In ten years, common bird populations have plummeted. They include, left to right, song thrush (down 73 per cent), linnet (52 per cent), skylark (58 per cent), grey partridge (82 per cent), tree sparrow (89 per cent) and turtle dove (77 per cent)

Songbirds fall silent under onslaught of farming and pollution

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

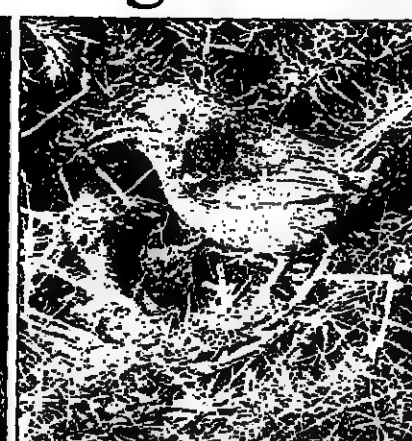
MILLIONS of songbirds are disappearing from gardens and the countryside, the victims of intensive farming, pollution and building. A detailed survey of the 280 species found in the British Isles — including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man — has found that the decline of birds such as the skylark, linnet, song thrush and tree sparrow has accelerated during the 1990s.

Ten years ago, eight birds were on the nation's red list of vulnerable species. Dr David Gibbons of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds said yesterday that it had since been necessary to add many once-common birds to the danger list, swelling the number to 36. Some less well-loved birds have increased in number, partly because fewer people are working in the countryside, which makes them less likely to be shot as pests. Among them is the magpie, up 268 per cent since the 1960s to 650,000 pairs, and the carrion crow, up 140 per cent to a million pairs.

The report has been compiled by the RSPB, the National Trust, the British Trust for Ornithology, the Game Con-



Not all bird species are in decline. Among a number of success stories are, left to right, the osprey, red kite, Dartford warbler and marsh harrier



servancy Council, the Wildlife and Wetlands Trust, the wildlife trusts, Birdlife International and the Hawk and Owl Trust.

They find that ten years ago the status of the spotted flycatcher gave little cause for alarm. The survey shows that numbers have slumped by 73 per cent in the past 25 to 27 years to 130,000 pairs. Indications are that at least 23 per cent of

this decline has occurred since the late 1980s. The skylark population is down 58 per cent to 2.1 million pairs; the grey partridge 82 per cent to 145,000 pairs; the tree sparrow 89 per cent to 10,000 pairs; the turtle dove 77 per cent to 75,000 pairs; the song thrush 73 per cent to 1.1 million pairs; and the linnet 52 per cent to 540,000 pairs.

Dr Gibbons said: "The chances of

seeing these birds in your garden are now far less than they were a few years ago because less are surviving in the countryside, especially on farmland."

Dr Mark Avery, chairman of the RSPB's Birds of Conservation Concern Working Group, said: "The fate of bird species acts as a barometer of the health of the environment. There are now more than twice as many species which are

rapidly declining than there were ten years ago. Things are getting worse rather than better."

He said intensification of agriculture was largely to blame: it was destroying habitats, increasing pollution, crushing some ground-nesting birds' eggs during the breeding season, and altering the availability of food.

Road building and the noise from

traffic have also taken their toll, as has the spread of housing, particularly in the South of England.

While the future for songbirds looks bleak, other species, many on the red list, have benefited from measures taken on their behalf. They include programmes of reintroduction from the Continent, better protection against persecution and egg thieves and more sensitive management of conifer woodlands. Milder winters have also helped.

The red kite has increased from 20 pairs to 160; the osprey from seven to 99; and the Dartford warbler from 560 to 1,600. Since 1969, marsh harriers have increased from three pairs to 100, thanks to the elimination of DDT and immigration from The Netherlands, where land reclamation hit the birds' habitat.

The songbird survey precedes the Government's response to the Biodiversity Steering Group report, published earlier in the year, which set out costed action plans to restore numbers of the most threatened species. The authors of the bird survey are urging the Government to rally the steering group's report in an attempt to head off a fatal collapse in Britain's songbird population.

The naked truth: fat and lazy males are winning the rat race

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

BEING a selfish, lazy, fat male need not be a handicap. According to a new study, these are the very qualities that make for a sense of adventure — if you are a naked mole rat.

This mammal, which fascinates biologists because it lives more like an insect, is found beneath the soil of East Africa. Naked mole rats — which are neither moles nor rats — dig out complex burrows where they establish colonies in which only the queen bears young.

About three inches long and weighing one or two ounces, they belong to the same zoological classification as porcupines, guinea pigs, chinchillas and coypus. Those with the most unappealing characteristics are most likely to found new colonies, a study in South Africa has found. Their fatness, indeed, may help them to survive until a new colony is established.

Like bees and ants, naked mole rats have a strict division of labour. Most of them spend their time digging to find food for the rest of the colony. They live on tubers, accessible only when the ground is wet after rain. Only by collaborating can they find enough food.



The naked mole rat: "ugly but magnificent"

Mole rat colonies are deeply inbred. Among animals, they are the nearest thing to a clone, as genetically alike as identical twins. But Dr Justin O'Rain and his colleagues at Cape Town University have found that there are a few who stand out from the crowd. These are the "dispersers" — the few inspired to leave the burrow for pastures new.

Normal mole rats are hostile to those from other colonies, but the dispersers have higher levels of hormones than their burrow-mates and try to mate with strange females. Within the colony, the dispersers collaborate only reluctantly with the

common tasks and are more inclined to wander abroad, the team reports in *Nature*.

Although the colonies are effective in providing a way of life in inhospitable conditions, they cannot survive for ever without the odd individual striking out. Only a few males in any colony get the chance to mate with the queen and the dispersers often apply for the job in colonies where the breeding male has died.

The team collected its data by observing 48 colonies of captive rats, containing in all about 1,000 individuals. They made a single opening in the burrow and watched which animals left. Only six of the

colonies had any dispersers and 95 per cent of them were male. What triggers the wanderlust is not clear. It may be genetic or it may be the age and composition of the colonies, the team says. The chances are that from time to time environmental conditions may promote dispersals in which the adventurous rats invade neighbouring colonies or find a few allies to form a new colony.

Sending out alone is remarkable for one of these animals because, unlike other mammals, they do not have a way of regulating their temperature. When they get cold, the only recourse is to huddle together three or four deep. This may be another reason why the dispersers tend to be fat, to protect them from the cold in solitude.

The limited sex lives of mole rats and the fact that they live permanently in the dark means that they have never needed to develop features that would attract mates. But beauty is in the eye of the zoologist. Dr Paul Sherman of Cornell University told *The New York Times*: "There's something charming, even magnificent, about these animals. What we regard as ugly is really a bundle of fancy adaptations for living underground."

Tory MP calls for action on asthma

By NICK NUTTALL

A SENIOR Conservative MP who is asthmatic yesterday accused the Government of complacency over efforts to reduce traffic fumes in cities.

Sir Graham Bright, former parliamentary aide to the Prime Minister, said not enough was being done to protect people with breathing difficulties from the fumes of buses, taxis, diesel cars and lorries. Speaking during a short House of Commons debate, Sir Graham said it was "galling" that technological solutions were available to cut dramatically particle fumes and soot.

He said a device called a continuous regeneration trap had been developed and needed government encouragement so that diesel vehicles caused less deadly pollution. "I would like to see it fitted to every new heavy goods vehicle and every bus, with the intention of extending it to all diesel cars."

He said the system would cost about £3,500 per HGV or bus but added: "The balance of costs and benefits will make retro-fitting even more attractive in the future."

Child with half a brain forces rethink on speech

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A BOY who learnt to speak only after half of his brain was removed may lead psychologists to rethink their ideas about the acquisition of language.

The boy, known as Alex, was born with a disorder called Sturge-Weber syndrome, which interfered with the blood supply to the left side of his brain. By the age of eight, he was able to utter only a few words and only one intelligible word, "mama".

Doctors decided to carry out radical surgery because he suffered from frequent epileptic fits. Christopher Adams, consultant neurosurgeon at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, removed the whole of the left half of his brain.

This procedure, though it appears drastic, is quite widely used in such cases, according to Dr Elizabeth Isaacs of the Institute of Child Health in London, who presented a paper on the case at a conference in Edinburgh. Children treated in this way can lead a nearly normal life, although their intelligence is low. Their IQ is about 70.

The operation was carried out when Alex was nine. The seizures ceased immediately but he was kept on anti-convulsant drugs for ten months as a precaution. He

began to speak about a month after coming off the drugs.

Dr Isaacs said that Alex, now 15 and at boarding school, had normal language skills and grammar and a wide vocabulary. According to Dr Mortimer Mishkin, a neurophysiologist from the US National Institute of Mental Health in Maryland, who is part of the team monitoring the boy's progress, he does not speak like an adult but his language ability "exceeds what you would expect from his IQ".

The case interests psychologists because it poses questions about language acquisition. The belief is that there is an age after which it is very difficult to learn to speak, one reason why it is hard to learn foreign languages as an adult.

"Some psychologists have said that the age limit is five or six," Dr Isaacs said, "but

others say that it is up to the age of puberty. We have a child here who learnt to speak after the age of ten, so this case at least argues for the higher age."

Dr John Marshall, a neurologist at Oxford University, told *New Scientist*: "It is an exceedingly remarkable case." However, he wondered whether Alex might have had the power of speech all along, but could not express it because of damage to the left hemisphere.

Dr Isaacs said she doubts this because of the way Alex learnt, uttering first single words and then phrases and sentences. "He went through all the same stages as a normal child but much more quickly. Tests of his comprehension before the operation showed that it was equivalent to a child of three and a half. He didn't have all that language bottled up in there."

Invasion of the ducks drives villagers to consider fowl play

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE village of Swanland, given its name by the Vikings who introduced swans there, is being overrun — by ducks. An invasion of wild mallards is also threatening to drive away Charlie and Esmeralda, the latest in a long line of swans which have graced the village pond.

A series of mild winters and a lack of natural predators have caused the duck population to soar to more than

1,000. They are devouring the swans' food and making the villagers' lives a misery.

Villagers have already rounded up some of the interlopers and dumped them on the Humber in nearby Hull, hoping that hunters who shoot there regularly might solve the problem, but other ducks simply moved in to replace them.

Locals are now planning more direct action. Mike Frankish, a parish councillor,



Swanland's two remaining swans are under threat

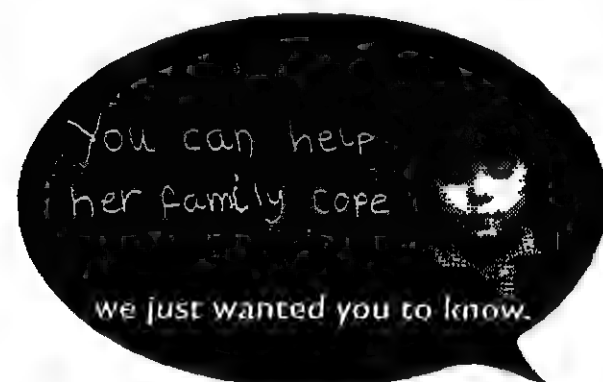
said: "Some people don't like the idea of shooting them, but we are overrun with the bloody things. Charlie and Esmeralda are being troubled

by the ducks. The mallards seem to be eating everything in sight, leaving the swans with nothing."

John Downing, parish

council chairman, said: "It's not too bad when they stay on the pond, but they are entering gardens. They have destroyed entire flower beds and keep villagers awake into the early hours with their quacking."

Steve Kehoe, landlord of the Swan and Cygnet pub, said a cull would be barbaric. The RSPCA agreed: "At the end of the day you are clearing the territory for more ducks to move in." Villagers are to seek advice from the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust.



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Post-Fascist leader determined to lift Duce's shadow

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN FLORENCE

GIANFRANCO FINI, the leader of Italy's post-Fascists and the rising star of the election campaign, yesterday said the legacy of Fascism had been overcome. Europe had no need to fear that a directly elected Italian presidency of the kind he favours would turn out to be "a short cut to power for a strong man".

In an interview with *The Times*, Signor Fini said the tide was turning in his favour, even in traditionally "Red" areas such as Tuscany and Emilia Romagna. He had just addressed a rally in Bologna, his home town, where he drew an admiring crowd of 10,000 — twice those at a rally for Fausto Bertinotti, the hardline Communist leader, near by.

"There was a tremendous crowd," Signor Fini said. "No one saw a single Mussolini-type Fascist salute. I did not search everyone, but as far as I know no one was carrying a Fascist banner or a portrait of Il Duce."

Signor Fini, 44, is tall, immaculately dressed, shrewd and personable. He is a polished speaker, with an ironic twinkle behind his rimless glasses. Doubts linger over his break with the Fascist MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano), which he dissolved just over a

year ago to form the more moderate Alleanza Nazionale. The cover of *L'Espresso* this week carried a caricature of him with bloody lips and mad staring eyes under the headline — "Beware of the Right".

Nonetheless, the Alleanza Nazionale is set to gain between 5 and 10 per cent in a

ITALIAN ELECTIONS

poll otherwise marked by apathy. One party likely to lose votes is Forza Italia, led by Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon who was Prime Minister for eight months in 1994 at the head of a centre-right coalition that included the MSI.

Yesterday Signor Berlusconi's trial on corruption charges resumed in Milan. Officially, Signor Fini shares his indignation over this "political-judicial bombardment".

Signor Fini insisted it was "too soon to say that our party is the dominant force on the Centre Right," adding Signor Berlusconi would be Prime Minister again if the bloc won. But few doubt Signor Fini would be the coalition's key figure. It would need "time and patience" before the world was convinced Mussolini's heritage had been buried, he said. In the last election, two years ago, Signor Fini described Mussolini as a "great statesman". He now says the Duce was "one of those who put his stamp on our century".

"There is a real Fascist party," Signor Fini said, referring to The Flame — a splinter group led by Pino Rauti which stayed faithful to Fascist ideology when Signor Fini broke up the MSI. "We have refused to make pacts with them, even in constituencies where a 1 per cent difference could let in the Left."

If there was a dead heat on Sunday between Centre Left and Centre Right, Signor Fini said, the only solution was to introduce further electoral reform and hold new elections in six months' time. He favours *presidentialismo* — a directly elected President on the French model — and said fears that a "strong man"



Gianfranco Fini arrives in Bologna's Piazza Maggiore for a pre-election rally

would misuse power as Mussolini had were misplaced. "Nobody says France is a Fascist country."

Parliament would remain paramount, as President Scalfaro had insisted. "When he warned about the dangers of authoritarianism recently, he assured me he was not

referring to the Centre Right or to me personally."

Signor Fini said the Alleanza Nazionale was not aligned with any conservative force in Europe because it had its own characteristics. Italy needed flexibility from Europe over monetary union to allow the lira to join, he said.

Europe, for its part, needed Italy as the country which understood best "the real danger to peace comes not from the East but from the South" — a reference to tensions caused by immigration and Islamic fundamentalism.

Leading article, page 21

Rifkind laments deadly British errors in Bosnia

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

IN THE Government's frankest admission yet of fatal flaws in its previous Bosnia policy, Malcolm Rifkind last night warned Europe that it should never again attempt to go it alone in peacekeeping without the Americans.

"When the international community faces a crisis on the scale of Yugoslavia's collapse, direct US involvement is indispensable, especially if military action is required. A 'European solution' to a European problem was never a realistic option," the Foreign Secretary said at the Lord Mayor's Easter Banquet in Guildhall.

"As events since Dayton have shown, the transatlantic partnership is the key to success. That partnership, of Europe and America working together, delivers results, diplomatic and military. So my firm view is that any arrangements we devise for the future must reflect that point."

He also brushed aside speculation that British troops might remain in Bosnia-Herzegovina after US forces pulled out at the end of the year. Nato forces, North American and European, had entered Bosnia together. "We will leave together. Any alternative would be foolish and short-sighted."

Admitting that United Nations credibility had been damaged by Bosnia, he suggested a "few lessons" that the world should learn. "We must not commit ourselves to a peacekeeping mission unless there is a peace to keep. Unproven (the UN Protection

Force) faced an impossible task."

It discharged that task as honourably as it could, saving tens of thousands of lives. "But if in future we want to intervene in a war zone, we must dispatch a force which is suitably structured and equipped for a role which might lead to combat." The second lesson was to avoid foreign policy by declaration. "The international community announced 'safe areas' in Bosnia without ever committing the forces necessary to make them a reality. The result was a damaging blow to international credibility."

Mr Rifkind gave a gloomy prognosis for peace in Bosnia. He criticised Bosnian leaders for their failure to bring about reconciliation. Only the people of Bosnia, in particular their leaders, could decide between peace and war. They had taken the first crucial steps, silencing the guns after years of fighting. But they had made no progress in living and working together for a united future.

Turning to the European Union, Mr Rifkind warned Britain's 14 partners at the inter-governmental conference not to fall into the trap of being fascinated by questions of construction. He said the Union faced a danger of "invidiously endlessly with the minutiae of the EU's institutional machinery, but losing sight of the point of it". Mr Rifkind hoped that, as Europe matured, it would escape the confines of institutional architects.

Steffi Graf's father charged over taxes

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BERLIN

THE father of tennis star Steffi Graf has been charged on suspicion of faking the tax returns of the world's top rated woman player and hiding her earnings from the German tax man.

The Stuttgart public prosecutor said Peter Graf — who has been under investigative arrest since August — would be brought to court along with accountant Joachim Eckhardt. The investigators have found no evidence against Miss Graf herself.

Herr Graf's lawyers said it was still not clear whether any tax evasion had actually taken place. "Tax law for international athletes is confusing and complicated," they said in a joint statement.

During a number of interrogations, Miss Graf has told the authorities that her father handles all her tax matters

and that her signatures on incomplete tax returns were made by a printing machine used to sign letters to her fans.

The prosecutor believes that some DM42 million (£18.5 million) was hidden from the gaze of the German tax office. In some years no tax returns were submitted at all for Miss Graf. In other years, hefty sums were written off. During this period, Herr Graf was his daughter's financial adviser.

The scandal has already claimed some of the tennis player's high-paying sponsors. Now prosecutors will be able to dig deeper into the nature of her various contracts.

Miss Graf's game has not seriously suffered since the arrest of her father. She visits him in prison, but relations are said to be very strained.

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Ten years on, dead zone of Chernobyl stays under siege

AN 18-mile radius round the Chernobyl disaster site in northern Ukraine is an eerie zone. Potholed tracks link deserted villages, where rusty equipment lies scattered about girded blocks of flats. Wild boars run past abandoned houses and crows perch on fallen electrical cables.

Ten years after the world's worst nuclear accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power station, the area around the crippled reactor resembles a desolate battlefield. But amid the debris, the campaign to contain the environmental pollution continues in a low-key fashion, since the state of emergency has long been over.

The exclusion zone is run much like a military camp. Girding inside requires clearance from one of three militia-maned control points and travel is restricted within the zone. Workers walk around in protective gear and talk of life as if they were under siege.

"Chernobyl is its own miniature world — we refer to life here as before or after the war," Svetlana Svirina, a physicist who came here in 1986, said. "At the time of the accident everyone worked round the clock just to cover the reactor. Like war, there

As John Major flies to Kiev to discuss nuclear safety with Leonid Kuchma, the Ukrainian President, Lesia Rudakewich travels to Chernobyl, where the atmosphere is still that of a desperate battleground

was a real difference between those who risked their lives and those who did not."

Today life in this barren wasteland seems less clear-cut. Buses shuttle workers daily to the two Chernobyl nuclear reactors, Nos 1 and 2, still producing electricity, even as staff continue to monitor radiation levels around reactor No. 4 that exploded on April 26, 1986. Reactor No. 2 was shut down in 1991 after a fire. The contaminated areas and "clean spots" lie next to each other inside the zone and people cross from one to the other without concern.

Officially the zone is an uninhabited area, but about 650 self-settlers — evacuees who returned — reside in their old homes, tending their gardens and raising livestock.

"There are strict controls on everything," emphasised Ms Svirina. "Chernobyl is still considered a dry zone — no

liquor or wine is allowed. Until last year, you couldn't even bring in a beer." In the early days if the militia had seized liquor at a checkpoint the worker's job was at stake, but now, she said, "the local militia themselves sell liquor at contraband prices".

Ironically, life in the zone has become bleaker now that the worst is over. In the months after the disaster, thousands of young people arrived to help with the emergency clean-up. A music hall staged concerts and a cinema screened popular films.

Today there are fewer amenities, fewer public places to go to, and fewer people. Ten years ago, people came because they had to, but now they mostly come for the pay.

"Once we had live entertainment. Today we can't even get newspapers," complained Sasha, a mechanic. "There was real work up to 1991-1992.



Workers in protective gear repair potholes along a road leading into the town of Chernobyl yesterday

Everyone knew what to do, and people in charge took responsibility. But now? You've got managers here drawing quadruple pay."

Andriy Sukharuchkin, deputy chief engineer at the radiation monitoring centre based in Pripyat, said: "People come to work here for

many reasons. For some, it is the salary, for others, the friendships. For me, it is my profession."

For some it is also the memory of surviving 1986 and playing a role in the crisis management. "In the early days there were world-class experts working here," re-

called Ms Svirina. "There was a spirit of camaraderie and purpose. People gave up their health and their lives. No one thought about the pay. They thought about the nation and the need to save it."

Just as strong is the attraction to this devastated earth. "It's a kind of insulation. I feel

like a human here," said Mr Sukharuchkin. "I go back to the city with its thousands of automobiles, and I don't feel healthy there."

Ms Svirina agrees. "Every time I drive to the reactor, I think it beautifully empty. After being away from Chernobyl for a while, you miss it."

Ukraine plays for time and money

By MICHAEL DYNES

THE spectre of a second explosion at the crippled Chernobyl complex in Ukraine, the site of the world's worst nuclear accident in April 1986, continues to haunt Western governments.

The Chernobyl complex houses four reactors. Number 4 was destroyed in the meltdown. Number 2 was shut down after a fire in the turbine hall in 1991, and the other two are still working.

Moscow was responsible for the clean-up operation during the first five years after the accident, making it difficult for Western powers to intervene. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, however, the Western powers were slow to take the initiative. Leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) leading industrial-

ised countries have since repeatedly insisted that the stricken complex be decommissioned. Originally, Kiev promised to comply with this demand by the end of 1993.

In October 1993, Ukraine changed its mind. Faced with the economic chaos which followed the demise of the Soviet Union, Ukraine could not survive without nuclear power which provides 40 per cent of its energy needs, 7 per cent of which comes from Chernobyl.

Ukrainian officials now insisted that the crumbling sarcophagus, which encases the wrecked reactor building, could be repaired, and the crippled plant could be modified to last until the end of its design life, in 2010. After a

warning by the International Atomic Energy Agency in 1994 that the sarcophagus was deteriorating at an alarming rate, a consortium of French, German and British companies won a £25 million European Union contract to carry out a feasibility study into how to shore up the existing structure.

The ten-month study concluded that the reactor lid and its chimney were in danger of collapsing. It proposed a £1 billion scheme for stabilising the sarcophagus, and constructing a new concrete bunker to house the second and third reactors.

Months of delicate talks between the G7 and Ukraine began to show results by April last year, when President

Kuchma promised to close Chernobyl by 2000, but insisted that the West would still have to provide for alternative sources of energy.

A memorandum of understanding was signed by the G7 and Ukraine last December, committing £2 billion in grants and loans to improve Chernobyl's short-term safety, and providing alternative sources of energy, in exchange for closing the plant down by the end of the decade.

As the tenth anniversary of the disaster approaches, Ukraine has yet to receive a penny in Western assistance. It will be years before Western governments will cease to worry about a repeat performance at Chernobyl.

G7 plans to stop uranium smuggling

By JILL SHERMAN
CHIEF POLITICAL
CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR will join Western leaders this weekend in backing an action plan to prevent nuclear weapons material being smuggled out of the former Soviet Union to terrorists or "rogue states".

The programme to be agreed at a summit of the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations, hosted by President Yeltsin in Moscow, has been drawn up because of growing fears that weapons-grade nuclear material is now being offered for sale for military use.

Last night the Prime Minister flew on the first leg of his trip to Prague, where he attended a dinner held by Vaclav Klaus, the Czech Prime Minister.

Today he will meet Leonid Kuchma, the Ukrainian President, and Yevgeni Marchuk, the Ukrainian Prime Minister, in Kiev, where the leaders are expected to discuss nuclear safety and the action programme on smuggling.

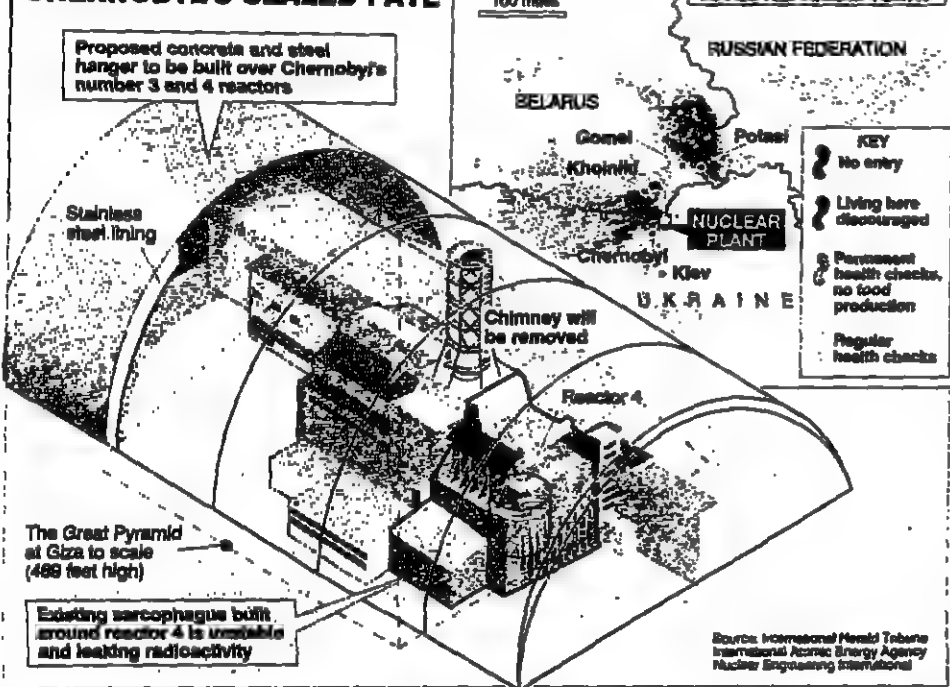
British officials emphasised that there had been no recorded attempt to smuggle nuclear materials. However, according to a report released by Harvard University, there have been six incidents in which highly enriched uranium or plutonium, the essential components for a nuclear bomb, were stolen in Russia.

The eight heads of state will approve a programme to try to prevent any materials with a potential military application from falling into the wrong hands and to deter potential traffickers. They will try to ensure that material no longer required at the vast former Soviet nuclear complex is disposed of safely.

The summit will also agree measures to ensure that nuclear reactors in the former Soviet Union are made safer or destroyed. The leaders will confirm a £2 billion programme leading to the closure of the Chernobyl plant and will take steps to improve safety at other reactors.

□ Moscow: Russia successfully carried out the experimental launch of a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile on Monday, Interfax reported. (AFP)

CHERNOBYL'S SEALED FATE



Pardon for prisoners who tackled fire

FROM REUTERS
IN KIEV

PRESIDENT Kuchma of Ukraine granted pardons yesterday to jailed offenders who helped to tackle the aftermath of the 1986 Chernobyl disaster or who suffered from its effects.

As part of commemorations to mark this month's tenth anniversary of the

world's biggest nuclear accident, a presidential decree freed from prison anyone who had served at least a third of a sentence for minor offences. About 25 million people, including 900,000 children, were affected by the accident.

"The President is demonstrating his humanity towards first offenders who helped to deal with or suffered from the accident," said Petro Andrichenko, the

head of the presidential pardon office. "It applies to more than 1,000 people."

Official statistics show that more than 300,000 Ukrainian citizens helped to put out the fire in the fourth reactor on April 26, 1986. The amnesty applies to adolescents, pregnant women and those with children. Beneficiaries must not have committed serious offences and must have behaved well in jail.

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TIMES



The shipowner Stavros Niarchos with his third wife, Evgenia, at Maxim's

Gaudy era dies with Niarchos

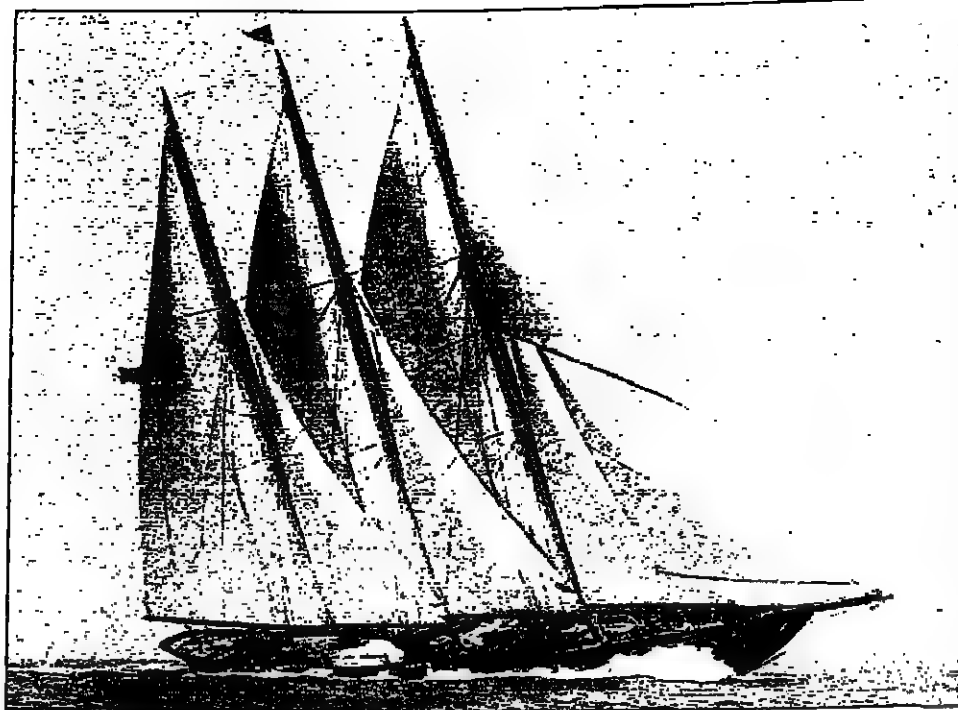
Battle of two tycoons gave birth to jet-set Greek myth

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE GREEK shipping magnate Stavros Niarchos, who died on Tuesday aged 86, was one of the last representatives of a gaudy but glamorous era when the size of a man's yacht and the lavishness of his parties directly reflected the breadth of his ego and the depth of his bank account.

Our age has become used to more reclusive and discreet billionaires, but Niarchos, with his brother-in-law and rival Aristotle Onassis, straddled the post-Second World War worlds of high society and business muscle, trailing money, former wives, mutual loathing and the whiff of scandal behind them.

They disbursed wealth conspicuously, on ever larger yachts, great paintings, para-



The schooner Creole, replaced in Niarchos's affections by the yacht Atlantis

dise retreats, fresh business ventures, and invited the world to gape. The age of Niarchos-Onassis was glorious in its vulgarity.

Niarchos was often described as a private man, at least compared with the swashbuckling Onassis, yet he had a taste for the rich

man's gestures and pleasures that made Robert Maxwell seem a shrinking violet: whether handing out gold sovereigns to Athens children or hunting leopards in Mozambique, he wore his wealth on the sleeve of his impeccable suits — ordered from a Milan tailor by the dozen.

The assessments of contemporaries over the years reflect how completely Niarchos became a figure of legend, even a cliché: "cool as glacier", "frankly sybaritic", "the New Argonaut", and so on.

With his ten Renaults and seven Van Goghs, his racehorses and properties spread across the globe he was, to use an appropriately old-fashioned-sounding term, a founder of the "international jet set". His entertaining was fabulous, whether on his yacht, in his Paris townhouse, or on the private Aegean island that he stocked with rare wild game and plants and exotic socialites, visiting royalty and world leaders. "Stavros never gives or goes to less than five parties a week," a friend noted in the 1950s.

A short, handsome man with an almost visible aura of energy, Niarchos often said of himself: "I am Greek and I feel Greek." But, like others in the rarefied arena of the massively rich, he was oddly stateless, restlessly travelling the world's most luxurious places. It was no accident that his shipping fleet tended to sail under flags of convenience.

The rivalry, which neither sought to conceal, between Niarchos and Onassis — over villas, islands, boats, oilfielding contracts and, above all, shipping empires — merely added to their shared myth. "In business we cut each other's throats," Onassis once remarked, "but now and then we sit around a table and behave — for the sake of the ladies."

But the ladies were bound up in the sumptuous soap opera, for only Hollywood could compete in creating such an improbably targeted tale.

The tycoon had five marriages, the third and longest to Evgenia Livanos, the daughter of fellow shipping magnate Stavros Livanos. Onassis had married her sister, Tina, a year earlier. In 1963, after 18 years of marriage and four children, Evgenia and Niarchos divorced.

Niarchos's subsequent marriage to Charlotte Ford, daughter of the car baron Henry Ford II, went the same way, whereupon he returned to Evgenia. When she died in 1970 from an overdose of sleeping pills, a post-mortem examination indicated he had suffered physical abuse. Niarchos insisted the injuries had been caused during his attempts to revive her and charges against him were dropped. A year later, in perhaps his most remarkable act of one-upmanship, he married Tina Onassis, his rival's former wife and his own former sister-in-law.

Onassis died in 1975, and one wonders whether Niarchos came to miss the adversary whom he had cordially detested for so many years. According to one old joke, Onassis once went to South Africa for a heart transplant operation costing \$1 million. A little later Niarchos did the same. When he returned he boasted to his competitor that his new heart had cost him half that amount.

"And so it is should," Onassis replied. "They gave you mine."

Obituary, page 3



Opera-singer Maria Callas at a nightclub with Niarchos's life-long rival, Aristotle Onassis



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Imran shows strain as he lashes out at reporter

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN LAHORE

CANCER patients returned gingerly to Imran Khan's bomb-damaged charity hospital in Lahore yesterday as he and his wife, Jemima, contemplated the impact of the attack on their increasingly exposed lives in the sinister world of Pakistani politics.

The strain on the former Pakistani cricket captain showed: he punched a reporter at the hospital for asking what was regarded as an offensive question, and expressed disgust at a suggestion that he arranged Sunday's blast himself to gain political mileage.

The poor, sitting in wheelchairs in makeshift waiting areas, were assured that doctors and nurses had heeded Mr Khan's appeals to continue their humanitarian work and that treatment would remain free.

The charity must now raise funds for repairs. It costs 250 million rupees (£5 million) a year to run the hospital, which sees about 200 patients a day. Mr Khan uses his mass appeal to keep the money pouring in. All patients are means-tested: last year only 8 per cent paid.

Mrs Jemima, as she is commonly known here, must be wondering into what kind of murky political world her marriage last year has taken her. Mr Khan must regard himself as an assassination target as he prepares to enter politics in a bid for the premiership.

He flew to Karachi yesterday to study fundraising schemes to pay for repairs to the hospital estimated at £1 million. The damage could take a year to fix. He returned to his home in the Zamana Park district of Lahore late last night, aware that life can never be the same. Today he will again visit the hospital, which was opened in December 1994 and named after his late mother, to give moral support to nervous staff.

Explosives experts yesterday

picked through the rubble of a corner of the building shattered in the blast, but found few clues. The nation shared a sense of disgust that such an institution should fall victim to political vengeance. It is assumed that the attack was a warning to Mr Khan to stay out of politics.

The signs are that the bomb had a timing device, enabling the attacker to be miles away when the explosion killed and maimed patients and staff in the outpatients' reception area. Burnt and twisted wheelchairs strewn about the building attested to the power of the blast. Pieces of furniture hurled through windows still lay on the lawns yesterday.

Mr Khan's foray into politics may not be announced officially for another few weeks. Initially he will launch what he calls a reformist movement, which will evolve into a party once it formulates policies on unemployment, drugs, violence and the conflict with India over Kashmir.

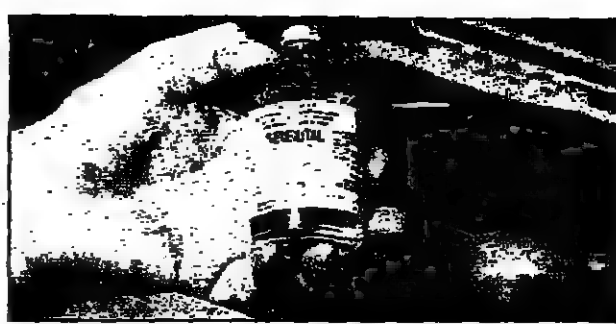
He has his sights set on the general election due in 1998, although he says there is no guarantee that he will be ready by then to make a bid for the post of Prime Minister. His manifesto may mark a shift away from an earlier fascination with Islamic fundamentalism, which worried educated Pakistani women. He once said Muslim women could do anything as long as their husbands gave them permission.

He has reinvented himself in the past year from a Westernised playboy to a traditional Pakistani in baggy clothes. For a time he associated with General Hamid Gul, a fundamentalist hardliner who was head of the Pakistan intelligence agency. He was also close to the youth wing of the fundamentalist Jamaat-i-Islami party.

Protection for Mr Khan and his wife was stepped up last night, although security at the hospital remained tight.



Dr Philip Nitschke with his computer program. The "final message" is on screen



Lethal drug: Nembutal, being used for euthanasia

Nurse will be first on death machine

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

A NURSE with terminal cancer hopes to be the first person to take advantage of the voluntary euthanasia laws which come into effect in Australia's Northern Territory on July 1. It was revealed yesterday.

Mrs Jan Culhane plans to use Dr Philip Nitschke's controversial computer software that will allow her to kill herself by lethal injection.

After making a series of commands at a bedside laptop computer — linked to a syringe driver — she will see this message on screen: "If you press 'Yes', you will cause a lethal injection to be given within 30 seconds and will die. Do you wish to proceed?" If she does so, Mrs Culhane will lose consciousness and die painlessly a few seconds later.

Before she takes that final step, two doctors have to agree she is suffering from an illness that will result in death, and a psychiatrist has

to establish that she is not suffering from treatable clinical depression.

Mrs Culhane, 51, a nurse for 30 years, has seen many of her patients suffer agonising death, a fate she is desperate to avoid. "I'm by no means under more pain than I've seen people survive, but it is pain that I am not willing to accept," she says.

Mrs Culhane developed breast cancer five years ago, and has had both breasts removed. The cancer has now spread to her lymph glands.

A mother of three, separated from her husband, she has already left her home in Albury, New South Wales, to live in Darwin. Critics of the legislation, who include the Australian Medical Association, fear Darwin could become the death capital of the world, as hundreds of terminally ill people make their way there for a date with Dr Nitschke's "death machine".

Doctor tells of backpackers' fatal wounds

BY ROGER MAYNARD

THE deaths of two British backpackers were detailed in a catalogue of injuries outlined in an Australian court yesterday. The jury listened in silence as Dr Peter Bradhurst, a forensic pathologist who carried out post-mortem examinations on Caroline Clarke and Joanne Walters, revealed the extent of their wounds.

He said Walters, from Maesteg, Mid Glamorgan, had suffered at least 14 stab wounds to the chest and neck. There was a gag around her mouth, and an untied ligature around her neck. "I suggested an attempt at strangulation or some form of restraint".

The body of Clarke, whose parents live near Hexham, Northumbria, was found with

a red cloth, which was peppered with gunshot holes. She had been shot ten times in the head and stabbed in the chest.

Dr Bradhurst said the stab wounds would have had to have been made by a 30mm knife. Shown a Bowie knife in court, he said he would have expected the blade to have caused a different-sized entry wound.

Ivan Milat, a roadworker who is alleged to have owned the knife, has pleaded not guilty to the murder of seven backpackers and the kidnapping of Paul Onions, a British tourist.

Earlier, Stephen Wright, an equity specialist from Beckenham, Kent, told how he met Clarke and Walters while he was on a working holiday

during 1992. They had worked as grapepickers in a winery at Mildura, Victoria, and toured Tasmania together.

On their return to Sydney, he put them up in his room at a backpackers' hostel on April 17, 1992, just before they left in search of harvesting work in Western Australia. They were not officially at the hostel on the night, to avoid paying for another night's accommodation, he said. They left early the following morning.

The prosecution asked: "Did you ever see them again?" He replied: "No."

Their remains were discovered five months later in the Belanglo State Forest in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales.



Clarke: repeatedly shot in the head



Walters: stabbed in the chest and neck

Canberra promises purge of diplomats

BY TOM WALKER

AUSTRALIA'S new Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, yesterday promised to clean up his country's embassies after recent revelations of paedophile rings run by its senior serving and former diplomats in Asia.

The "ugly envoy" scandal has ruined Mr Downer's inaugural tour, which takes him round the very "sex triangle" haunted by the errant diplomats. When he landed in Indonesia yesterday he was faced by allegations that William Brown, a former Second Secretary in the embassy in Jakarta, had been involved with four other Australians in a paedophile ring on the nearby island of Lombok.

Mr Brown and Robert Dunn, a former Sydney teacher, are being investigated by Indonesian and Australian federal police.

Last year Ken Aldred, a maverick Liberal MP, accused John Holloway, a former Ambassador to Manila and Cambodia, and three other senior diplomats, of being paedophiles. Mr Holloway has since returned to Australia and last week faced questions from police in Canberra.

Since then another top-ranking diplomat has been suspended on full pay, pending an investigation into child abuse allegations. Sources in Canberra said yesterday that he was believed to have worked in South-East Asia, although his whereabouts are unknown.

Mr Downer, who had been hoping to use his tour to bolster diplomatic and trade relations, said that "no stone would be left unturned" in the Government's purge of the diplomatic service. He described the alleged activities of Mr Brown as "abhorrent behaviour".

Mr Dunn, who appears to have been sheltered by Mr Brown for several months, has been described by an Australian royal commission as a paedophile. The commission, which is continuing its work, has been investigating child sex abuse allegations against diplomats and businessmen for the past year. James Wood, of the commission, described Mr Dunn's exploits as "evil" and "frightening".

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US and Japan seal new security pact to defend Pacific

FROM ROBERT WHYMANT IN TOKYO

JAPAN and the United States, in a historic declaration yesterday, agreed to strengthen their defence alliance and pursue a joint strategy to maintain peace and prosperity in Asia and the Pacific in the post-Cold War era.

At a watershed summit, President Clinton and Ryutaro Hashimoto, the Japanese Prime Minister, celebrated the US-Japan security treaty as the anchor of "one of the most successful bilateral relationships in history".

Playing down the trade frictions that plagued previous summits, Mr Clinton and Mr Hashimoto focused on the need to restructure the alliance between the world's two biggest economic powers by expanding the role of the Japanese armed forces. "Our security alliance is the key to maintaining a Pacific at peace, especially at this time of profound regional change," Mr Clinton said.

In a joint declaration on security, issued after the talks, the US pledged to maintain its current level of about 100,000 troops in East Asia, including 47,000 stationed in Japan. Mr

Hashimoto committed Japan to continue paying most of the costs of maintaining the US military presence.

Last night the Japanese media were unanimous in their opinion that the summit had lived up to its billing as the "most significant summit since the end of the Cold War" — words that William Perry, the US Defence Secretary, had used to preview the meeting.

The three-day official visit, which began on Tuesday, has been full of pomp. President and Mrs Clinton twice met Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, when they were officially welcomed and later yesterday at a banquet at the Imperial Palace.

After the meeting with Mr Hashimoto, Mr Clinton said America was committed to reducing the number of US bases on the southern island of Okinawa, where the military presence is most intrusive. Washington decided to return several facilities in a bid to calm anti-base protests on Okinawa after the rape of a schoolgirl by three US servicemen last year.

Standing beside the Pres-

ident in the grounds of Tokyo's Akasaka Palace yesterday, Mr Hashimoto emphasised that, without the US military presence, Japan would have to re-arm itself, which would perturb its neighbours.

The summit marked the first time that leaders of Japan and America had come together to address the security challenges posed by the end of the Cold War and the waning of the Soviet threat. Now, the deterrent value of their alliance lies in coping with the increasing power of China and uncertainties about Peking's future behaviour.

The closer defence ties were symbolised by Mr Clinton's visit to the USS Independence, the aircraft carrier deployed last month to deter any Chinese attack on Taiwan during Peking's hostile military exercises. Speaking on board the carrier, anchored at Yokosuka, southwest of Tokyo, Mr Clinton said its deployment "helped to calm a rising storm". A Japanese Navy cruiser tied up alongside, and its crew joined in welcoming the President.

Under the new security



Empress Michiko, right, introduces Hillary Clinton to members of the Imperial Family at a welcoming ceremony yesterday at the Akasaka Palace

alliance, Japan will in future play an active role alongside US forces in the common cause of defending the Asia-Pacific region. The two leaders also discussed what they could do in case of a conflict in Asia,

and agreed to review guidelines on defence co-operation. Until now Japan had argued that a conflict in Korea or the Taiwan Strait was not its business. But many Japanese are now aware that the second

biggest economic power can no longer shirk its responsibilities. Politicians have been preparing the country for a further watering-down of its peace constitution by saying that Tokyo would incur world

censure if it denied assistance to US forces engaged in a Korean conflict. Over the past year, teams from the Pentagon and the Japanese Self-Defence Forces have worked together on the

new approach to defence co-operation enshrined in yesterday's declaration, enabling Mr Clinton and Mr Hashimoto to wax eloquent about common security objectives as they enter the 21st century.

Jimmy the Goodfella makes gentle exit

FROM QUENTIN LETTIS IN NEW YORK



Burke: Irish Godfather who would help pensioners to cross the street

JIMMY THE GENT has died, but not in a burst of bullets. Mobster James Burke, to give him his real name, was one of New York's original "Goodfellas" and was played in the film by Robert De Niro. He has died of cancer in hospital, after being taken there from prison.

Burke, of Irish immigrant stock, rose to prominence in New York's predominantly Italian mob after the then record theft of \$5.8 million from a Lufthansa jetliner at Kennedy airport in 1973. Police said that he was the head of the operation, although they never pinned the crime on the man whose other nickname was "the Irish Godfather".

Many of those involved in the airport heist came to unpleasant ends in what became a notorious falling-out among thieves. Eight of them disappeared — with concrete boots — and a pet beautician called Theresa Ferrara was chopped up into little pieces and scattered over New Jersey from a helicopter. Burke

was called "Jimmy the Gent" partly in fearful irony, partly because he was one of those criminals who would help old age pensioners across the street and call police "Mr". "I marvelled at his charm," said Ed McDonald, a former head of New York's Organised Crime Strike Force. "He was always polite."

Gambling was Burke's weakness, and the police finally tripped him up on a 1982 charge of fixing college basketball games. He was later convicted of murder. His victim, a drug dealer, was found in a meat freezer with his limbs "hog-tied".

At his own death, Jimmy the Gent still had ten years to do in jail. He died aged 64, a good tally for a mobster, and he went "with his boots off", as the mourners remarked to each other at the James Romanelli undertaker's parlour where he deserved special rates. The funeral is today, and a dark-suited, bulky-jacketed congregation is expected.

US smokers gasping for Cuban cigar

New York: Poor tobacco crops and increased customs vigilance have caused a shortage of black market Cuban cigars in America (Quentin Lettis writes).

Despite a trade embargo imposed by President Kennedy in 1963, a smuggling network has ensured that American smokers continued to enjoy the powerful "hit" of a Cuban cigar.

The current shortage in which prices have risen by around 40 per cent, with 50 coronas fetching at least \$850 (£566), started in earnest two weeks ago after the recent deterioration in relations between Washington and Havana.

Buchanan snipes at Dole with call for tough line on China

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PAT BUCHANAN put Bob Dole, the Republican presidential nominee, on the spot yesterday by demanding an end to America's "object appeasement" of China.

The conservative columnist was speaking for many on the Republican Right who believe it is time that the party treated China as a "noxious neighbourhood bully" and "the biggest rogue nation on earth". Mr Dole is so torn on the issue, however, that he has cancelled a speech he was to have made in California on Monday.

President Clinton must decide by June 4 whether to grant another annual extension of China's most favoured nation trading status, which means low tariffs on Chinese imports. He is expected to do so despite Peking's continuing human rights abuses, theft of American intellectual property rights, flouting of arms control agreements and recent aggression towards Taiwan.

Such a decision would give Mr Dole a great opportunity to attack the President for coddling "the butchers of Beijing" — the very accusation Mr Clinton made against President Bush during the 1992 presidential campaign.

However, Mr Dole has long supported preferential trading status for Peking, not least because his home state of Kansas does considerable business with China. The Republicans' traditional business interests want China's favoured status renewed and Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, declared his support for a further extension yesterday.

Mr Dole hopes to make Mr Clinton's wobbly foreign policy performance a key election issue this autumn, but the Republicans are deeply divided on a whole range of foreign policy issues ranging from the role of the United Nations to Nato expansion, and from intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina to foreign aid.

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General tells Peres not to end war in Lebanon too soon

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ISRAEL'S top military officer in Lebanon yesterday issued an unprecedented challenge to Shimon Peres, the Israeli Prime Minister, urging him not to order a swift end to Operation Grapes of Wrath. The intervention by Brigadier-General Giora Inbar has prompted an extraordinary political dispute in Israel about the conduct of the war in Lebanon.

The general, a controversial war hero who is regarded by many Israelis as too popular and closely involved in the fighting to dismiss, told reporters that the Israel Defence Force would not let Mr Peres negotiate an end to the war at this stage.

The general's challenge to the authority of the man who doubts as Prime Minister and Defence Minister cast a shadow over American-led diplomatic efforts to end the fighting, now in its seventh day. It provoked fury among

MILITARY CHALLENGE

left-wing Israeli politicians who were concerned that their country was once again being dragged back into the Lebanese "quagmire".

"We are advancing step by step. We will not permit a situation in which the Prime Minister suddenly stops us without having accomplished the tasks," the general said at the Tel Nafes base in the occupied south Lebanon "security zone" held by Israel since 1985. He repeatedly broke off from his remarks to direct artillery reprisals against attacks to the north.

Fears immediately swept the Labour-led Government that the top brass had effectively usurped power from Mr Peres, a politician renowned for not having a military background.

Many commentators saw

the influence of the main right-wing Likud opposition party behind the general's remarks. Likud has argued that Operation Grapes of Wrath has not yet gone far enough in dismantling the terrorist capabilities of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah.

General Inbar is the liaison officer with Israel's client militia, the South Lebanon Army (SLA), which is carrying out most of the fighting against Hezbollah targets on the ground.

"He will be reprimanded, but at this juncture of the military operation he will not be sacked," one Israeli official said. "That would pull the carpet from under the feet of the SLA."

Government members of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee demanded an explanation from Lieutenant-General Amnon Shahak, the Chief of Staff. He told the committee that General Inbar's statement was "silly and unnecessary".

The Israeli Government is anxious about the effects of the conflict on domestic opinion before the general election on May 29 and the American-led diplomatic efforts to bring about a ceasefire. Dedi Truker, a left-wing member of the Knesset, said: "One should hope that it is not the army which is leading the political echelon in this operation as one may guess from [General] Inbar's statements."

Uri Dromi, the head of the Government's press office, said: "This was an aberration by this man and not a sign that the Government and the military are not working in complete harmony on this operation."

Some diplomatic observers believe General Inbar spoke out in an attempt to warn the Government against trying to bring about any quick halt to the fighting such as that ordered in 1993 to end Operation Accountability. They pointed out that there was an undercurrent of hawkish opposition to Labour policies inside the military.



Rafik Hariri has a final inspection by a military aide before meeting John Major

Major offers aid for civilians fleeing onslaught

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

LONDON

JOHN MAJOR yesterday told Rafik Hariri, the Lebanese Prime Minister, that Britain was ready to rush emergency aid to Lebanon to help civilians fleeing the Israeli onslaught.

The Downing Street talks came as Britain took a markedly more critical line towards the Israeli attacks on Lebanon. The Prime Minister expressed his concern, and said everything must be done to break the cycle of violence. Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, said Britain was disturbed by the rising number of civilian casualties. The mounting violence was another threat to the peace process. New humanitarian problems were developing as people fled from the south of the country.

Mr Hariri told a press conference that his Government would not try to disarm Hezbollah while the Israelis occupied the south of Lebanon. That would be a betrayal, and would condone the occupation. Peace was not possible until Israel fulfilled United Nations resolution 425 calling for the removal of its troops.

He welcomed both the American and French peace proposals: each had points that Lebanon could accept as well as unacceptable proposals. He wanted to fuse the two

plans, and supported their demand that Israel stop attacking Lebanese civilians.

The Israeli attacks had not harmed Hezbollah, he noted: on the contrary, they had strengthened the radical group. No Hezbollah fighter had been killed, and his military machine was intact.

Mr Hariri admitted that Hezbollah posed problems for his Government. But he added: "If Israel asks us to make life easy for them while they are occupying parts of our country, we are not going to do that. No Lebanese government could do that."

Israel had made it quite clear that its intention was to hurt Lebanon's economic recovery. The attacks on power stations had plunged Beirut into darkness. But he defiantly rejected any intimidation. Beirut was not in panic, he said: the currency was stable; and France had promised emergency help to repair the power stations within two days.

Last night the British Red Cross launched an emergency appeal for those displaced by the fighting. It said that an estimated 400,000 people had fled, and the exodus was still not over.

Hezbollah rejects peace conditions

BY MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

US PROPOSAL

THE pro-Iranian Hezbollah group yesterday rejected an American proposal for ending a week-long Israeli blitz into Lebanon and renewed its commitment to its guerrilla warfare against Israel's occupation of south Lebanon.

"We reject the American initiative," Hezbollah MP Ali Ammar said. "To us, the American proposal means suicide."

President Clinton, speaking in Tokyo, regretted that the peace initiative had not made progress but insisted: "We will do what we can to bring an end to the violence and try to re-establish a workable agreement." Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State, continued to press the initiative, telephoning the foreign ministers of Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia from Tokyo.

Mr Ammar said: "We believe that the American side is not fit to launch any initiatives because it provides the political, moral and military cover for the Israeli aggression. Any American initiative is naturally in line with the Israeli conditions... We assert our basic principles to continue our resistance so long as occupation of our land remains."

Ammar has refused to criticise the Israeli offensive and repeatedly blamed Hezbollah rocket attacks for provoking Israel. A State Department spokesman said: "What we would like to see is an agreement by Hezbollah to stop the rocket attacks. We believe that if Hezbollah agrees to do that in good faith, there is reason to believe that Israel would also be willing to comply."

Letters, page 21

Defiant few remain in frontline ghost city

"ALLAH be with you," said the nervous young Lebanese soldier manning an anti-aircraft position, as he waved us into Tyre, a virtual ghost city on the last active front line in the Arab-Israeli conflict.



In the bombarded city of Tyre, Michael Theodorou discovers a mood of grim fatalism as Israel returns to the attack

There had seemed little to fear as we approached on the deserted coastal road. Farmers still picked crops in the citrus groves and banana plantations and street traders sold foam mattresses to the homeless. "Dream Well" said one sign.

However, within minutes of entering the city, once the centre of the ancient Phoenician civilisation, the boom of an Israeli warplane breaking the sound barrier shook the ground. Our alarm provided some scornful amusement for a group of Lebanese and Palestinian men lounging out-

side a rundown café with blown-out windows. They had experienced much worse in past days and years.

Tyre, usually home to more than 200,000 people, was occupied by Israeli forces for three years after their 1982 invasion of Lebanon. Since Sunday's Israeli ultimatum for everyone to leave, the city and several villages surrounding it, have suffered an average of 90 air raids a day. Like mildly curious sightseers, the group of men stirred themselves to watch an Israeli

Apache helicopter gunship swooping low over a village south of the city.

There was a distant rumble and a plume of dense smoke which rose above the wooded hills of the Jebel Amal, the Hills of Hope.

"Lucky Strike" read a cigarette advertisement hoarding over the café above a poster of Ayatollah Khomeini, the late Iranian leader. The air raids and artillery barrages continued all day. A convoy of five white vehicles with blue-helmeted Ghanajian - United

Nations peacekeepers screamed past, bearing humanitarian aid for some 6,000 civilians in southern Lebanon who have thrown themselves at the UN's mercy.

The ferocity of the blitz meant overstretched UN peacekeepers were unable to reach hundreds more people they feared marooned, hungry and short of medicine.

The mood of the few thousand who have remained in Tyre and braved the Israeli blitz that has filled its hospital with mostly civilian casualties was one of grim fatalism. Some were grinning satisfied that Hezbollah has rejected an American ceasefire proposal and had continued to fire dozens of Katyusha rockets into northern Israel.

"The only language Israel understands is force," said

Mahmoud Kod, a student who added that he had remained in Tyre to show his support for Hezbollah.

Metulla, northern Israel: When Israel allowed Lebanese children to cross the country's northern border yesterday to receive medical treatment, some journalists present felt the operation was so stage-managed they could not report it (Ross Dunn writes).

The mission's objective was to show that Israelis care about the suffering of Lebanese civilians. Some journalists felt those coming across the border were being treated just as much by "spin doctors" as they were by medical practitioners. Never before has the international media been so deluged with information by the usually reserved Israeli military authorities.

Lib Dems predict strong showing

investors! rail sell-off

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Is it true that men have become such wimps that the only power left to them is to say no to sex? Giles Coren reports

AFTER the recent sperm-count scare, which revealed that men are becoming less able to procreate because of ubiquitous artificial oestrogens, global warming and tight trousers, a new report has driven the final nail into the coffin of what was once the male sex myth.

A study by the marriage guidance service Relate claims that the incidence of impotence has been rising steadily, as it were, over the past ten years (one in four men in psychosexual therapy complain of the problem), and that the cause of this is purely social. "There has been a significant increase in power for women," says a Relate therapist, commenting on the findings. "And this has led to disorders in male desire, with them feeling uninterested in sex."

Among other explanations, it has been suggested that men may feel that the only power left to them is the power to say "no" to sex. While this is clearly reactionary sexism, it does reopen some of the old wounds of the sexual revolution. As well as some of the questions.

Can a powerful woman make a man feel so uncomfortable that he is unable to perform sexually? Can the existence of female superiors in the office operate a general emasculation that he takes home with him in the evenings? And does this mean that an environment of social and professional equality compromises traditional sexual relations? The trouble, as ever, is getting any sense out of men.

Taxi driver Mark Law, 34, sees it like this: "When you've got a bird in the back of the cab your first thought is always 'what are my chances'. But when it is a woman with a briefcase who wants to go to Bishopsgate, then it's strictly hands off. I know what I mean? They don't do anything for me. But I'm sure I could, if I had to."

Vic Harper, 27, is a foreign



The classic question... but now it is being asked by men who are worried that the growing power of women at work is threatening their masculinity

Why successful women fail to turn men on

exchange dealer in the City. "This is a tricky one," he says. "Looking around me I can't see a single woman in the dealing room. The only ones in this company are secretaries. But if I had a powerful boss I can't imagine I would feel emasculated. I would consider it a challenge to seduce her."

"However tough she seemed to

be at work, I suspect she'd be a pussycat in the bedroom. I think it would make her much more attractive. More of a challenge... a touch of the Sharon Stones."

What if his own girlfriend were

suddenly to become powerful, returning from work late, in a pinstripe suit, after a hard day's asset stripping? "I'd fancy her even more, and pounce on her the moment she got in. It's like having a 32-year-old when you are only 10 — the ultimate high — but as you get older, power replaces age as the thing that makes a woman exciting and, in a way, frightening. It's something extra to brag about to your mates, and if you encounter operational difficulties due to an

inferiority complex, well, you don't tell them that, do you?" The experience of Dr Thomas Stuttford suggests that a number of men may be concealing their failures in this way. He cites a survey taken among farming families in which the women were found often to be frigid, but the men very potent. "When these

families moved to the city," he says, "the women got jobs and lost their frigidity, only to find the men had become impotent. I saw a lot of this when I was working in a VD clinic. It is all because men are brought up, wrongly, to think of themselves as studs and the women as receptive hands. But when that balance is challenged the men — particularly

those with fragile self-esteem — start having trouble." This problem does not afflict photographer Robin March, whose girlfriend is a successful journalist. "I can't say I've noticed any qualitative difference in my performance," he says. "A woman is only a woman, after all. They just have different buttons."

Meaning you have to press different emotional buttons, so to speak, to generate sexual responses in women of different statuses?

"No, I mean they have different buttons. A successful woman has lots of big Chanel buttons down the front of her power suit. A student has the fly-buttons on her jeans. And a really cheap date will have no buttons at all, just a zip."

It seems that the onset of second-generation Laddism has blown away the sexual reticence of the early 1990s, and men are forced to profess sexual interest in any animate object that crosses their path. Who knows, maybe Patsy Kensit's fame causes even Liam Gallagher trouble in bed? But would he admit to it?

Unlikely. It would be like Macbeth admitting that he had not had a tumble since his wife took an interest in politics. "Unsex me here!" she cried, and repeatedly cursed her femininity. The logic of Macbeth equates power with masculinity, and to get her way Lady Macbeth had to become a man. Now, everyone knows that Macbeth's inactivity was actually a metaphor for his sexual impotence, he simply could not perform, for such a powerful woman.

Rodney Logan, a 26-year-old pilot, has encountered similar problems. "One of my instructors, on an important flight test, was a very lovely young German," he says. "I knew that she fancied me, and felt that I was obliged to impress her with my flying to confirm her desire. It all got rather steamy. But there were a thousand other things I should have been concentrating on. In the event, I made a mess of the flight, and when she did make a pass at me, I wasn't in the mood at all. So no test pass, and no hanky-panky."

And what has he learned? "I have taught myself to be utterly oblivious to sex, and act on a strictly no-gender basis. Spending long hours alone in a subservient position with women in their late-twenties, the thought invariably comes up. But I have to pretend I have no balls. It is the only way."

□ Most mental patients are docile but can we predict when one will strike? □ Hay-fever sufferers should take early treatment

Signs of violence

AFTER my father had qualified as a doctor he found that his duties severely interfered with playing cricket. His compromise was to accept a junior hospital appointment at Cane Hill, the psychiatric hospital in Surrey. At Cane Hill his clinical duties weren't arduous, he had plenty of time off to play cricket and was even able to organise a hospital side for the patients and staff.

One fellow team member, a schizophrenic, was a particular friend and as a result my father spent much of his time on the ward, chatting to him about cricket, life and psychiatric problems. One day after the usual jolly morning chat, my father was about to leave the room, but before leaving turned round to give a wave to

his team-mate. This gesture may have saved his life, for at that moment his fellow cricketer clubbed him with a long, thick sock which had been painstakingly filled with stones collected over many weeks from the cricket field. The sudden turn before leaving resulted in the blow falling on my father's shoulder rather than his head.

For the rest of his life my father used this story to illustrate his view that violence is not always predictable and that it requires more experience than he had at the time to notice any warning signs.

Even today when diagnosis and care in hospitals has improved immeasurably, one in ten patients still assault staff, and NHS workers are three times more likely than their counterparts in industry to be injured.

Although the mentally ill account for a very small proportion of the perpetrators of violent crime, stories of such crime when it involves psychiatric patients being cared for in the community, usually attract headlines. The great majority of schizophrenic patients are over-sensitive and retiring by nature but it is

undeniable that they are more likely than the rest of the population to be involved in violent incidents.

The British Medical Journal has recently carried an article by Jeremy Coid, Professor of Forensic Psychiatry at Barts and the London Hospitals Medical College, on these risks in which he admits that the true potential for dangerous behaviour may have been seriously underestimated. So while for doctors, patients and their families it is

comforting to know that in any one year, 90 per cent of schizophrenics whose disease is not complicated by other mental problems are unlikely to be involved in any violent episode, for the patients' neighbours a 10 per cent chance of a barny next door.

in the street or at work may seem unacceptable.

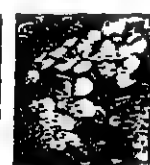
Both Professor Coid's article and the commentary on it outline the factors which may help to predict which patients are more likely to be violent. This more detailed and careful assessment is essential. It might in the past have saved

my father his humiliating and potentially lethal attack, but if today it could be used to give greater selectivity when choosing those who are to be cared for in the community, the general public would be saved from having their fears unnecessarily aroused by the occasional act of violence.

The clinical indications of risk are numerous but paranoid persecutory delusions are the most obvious risk factor either when they result in the patient feeling under threat, or when patients feel that their minds are controlled by outside forces.



MEDICAL BRIEFING
Dr Thomas Stuttford



WHEN the British Allergy Foundation decided to start its anti-hay fever campaign early this year, it had no way of knowing that spring would be so late.

Usually by the second week of April those who suffer from a streaming nose, red eyes and uncontrollable sneezing when they are confronted by pollen would have already been closing the windows and reaching for their dark glasses, while leaving it to others to wander idly beneath the cherry blossom.

The foundation's campaign is designed to encourage patients to commence taking their treatment before the hay-fever season has reached its peak, which normally corresponds to the time when the atmosphere is heaviest with grass pollens — in June and July.

Flowering trees and wild flowers also produce allergens which can cause trouble at any time from now until the autumn.

There is evidence that taking standard treatment before symptoms start, and not wait-

Wheezes to defeat summer sneezes

ing until you are suffering from a blocked nose and watery eyes, is an important factor in ensuring that a normal outdoor life can be led throughout the summer.

The usual treatment, an anti-inflammatory nasal spray such as Becosone combined with the long-acting antihistamines, which do not

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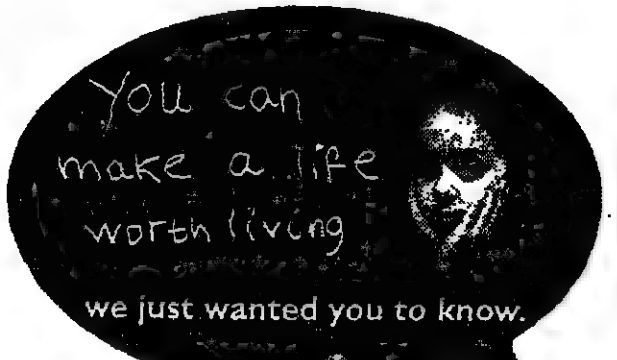
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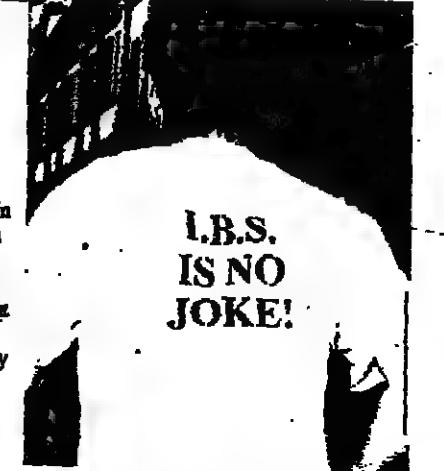
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The other Yeltsin



The real Yeltsin

Even the Muscovites are confused when the President's double steps out, says Richard Beeston

BORIS YELTSIN strode purposefully into the Moscow bar as a group of dozy waiters and waitresses snapped to attention with a look of disbelief on their faces.

The man who seldom ventures out of the confines of the Kremlin, unless he is escorted by a cavalcade of limousines and bodyguards, had wandered in off the street and ordered a large brandy. "I should get out and about a bit more like this," said the silver-haired Russian, nodding regally at the startled customers. "The people love it when they can see me up close."

The ruse would probably have worked, had Aleksandr Skorokhod, Yeltsin's look-alike, not been joined at that moment by a Lenin double, complete with goatee beard and worker's cap, who upstaged the performance with a noisy speech about world revolution.

"Typical of a communist," snarled Skorokhod amiably about his fellow impostor, with whom he often works in a double act. "They always want the last word."

Skorokhod entered a look-alike contest in 1990, along with hundreds of Lenins, Stalins, Khrushchevs and Gorbachevs. Although he easily beat the other 28 contestants for the



It is him, or isn't it? Aleksandr Skorokhod (alias Boris Yeltsin) poses for the camera in a Moscow sauna

Yeltsin category, he was not fully convinced of his likeness until he tested it out on some unsuspecting Muscovites.

"I was walking down the Arbat (a famous Moscow street) with a guy from Kazakhstan who won the Ronald Reagan competition," he recalls. "I noticed that he had a button missing from his coat and that we were in front of a haberdashery shop. I went in, explained that the American President was outside and that we needed their help. The old ladies fell for it and got to work sewing on a new button."

A year later, when the Soviet Union collapsed and Yeltsin became President, Skorokhod, a retired engineer from southern Russia who survives on a £30-a-month pension, found

himself very popular. In the old days, a double's only role was that of disinformation — appearing in public in place of a desperately sick leader, for example. But post cold war, look-alikes are in huge demand. Skorokhod has had walk-on roles in six foreign films, including a bit part in *Police Academy VII*.

He has reached such cult status in his home town of Taganrog that the local administration frequently invites him to attend public functions in an effort to lighten the atmosphere during VIP visits.

"When Solzhenitsyn came to visit our area I was introduced to him as the President," he

said. "The poor man started a long speech, before he realised he had been tricked. To give him credit, he thought it was very funny. The same is not true of Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (the ultra-nationalist leader), he was left speechless."

The more Skorokhod plays the role of the President, the more he finds he has in common with Yeltsin other than just the extraordinary similarity of his facial features.

"I was very surprised by how alike we are," he says. "We both worked as construction engineers, we were both in the Communist Party and we both like a drink and a joke." The two did meet once during the shooting of a film in Yeltsin's office, when the

Russian leader came into the room. "As we stood facing each other, a priest who was part of the film walked in and did not know which of us to address until he recognised the missing fingers on Yeltsin's hand from a childhood accident."

After six years of impersonating the Kremlin leader, Skorokhod's brief acting career could be in jeopardy, however, since President Yeltsin is trailing in the polls and faces a tough re-election battle this June.

"I have noticed that people have changed their attitudes to Yeltsin. They used to be much more enthusiastic," he says with genuine regret. "Still, he can be sure of at least one loyal supporter — me."

Paul Heiney on why a charity's vital work has stopped

THIS morning the Archbishop of Uganda, Livingstone Mpalanyi-Nkoyoyo, on a goodwill visit to Bristol, will speak of the continuing urgent need of his country for fresh milk to combat malnutrition.

At the same time, we in Britain are busy devising schemes in which 15,000 cows can be sent to the incinerator every week for no scientifically proved reason, but to "restore confidence".

Forget for one moment, if you can, the uncomfortable juxtaposition of these two events, and think instead of one cow in particular. She was called Tutti; a black and white Friesian heifer bought two years ago by readers of this newspaper and sent to Uganda as part of an inspired aid scheme run by Send a Cow, the charity based in Bath. On your behalf, I went with her.

The moment I handed her over to her new keeper, Betty Kiwanuka, was unforgettable, not simply because of the tears in Betty's eye or

the singing of joyful hymns by the dozen children in her care, but because this was not a single gesture, rather the down-payment on a long-term investment that would not only supply milk for the family and village, but income for Betty with which she could buy education for her children and provide employment in her village.

It wasn't all bad news from the cow's point of view either: Send a Cow funds British-trained vets to oversee the training of the cows' new owners, teaches animal welfare and nutrition, and the growing of fodder crops. Given that the climate in Uganda is moist and warm and not overpowering despite its equatorial position, it is never steamier than a hot summer's day in Devon.

To prove the point, losses among cows exported to Uganda by Send a Cow are half what might be expected in a herd living in Britain. In other words, the gift of a cow brings food, health and wealth to those who need it most, and the cow is clearly

Hope is put on hold for ten families

quite happy to do the job. Then came BSE, and the heart-stopping thought that what we had always assumed was an act of charity was yet another infliction on the people of Uganda.

They have suffered evil dictatorship, the civil war which decimated their native herd and Aids. They need BSE like a hole in the brain. With some relief, I can tell you that since BSE first became apparent in Britain in the mid-Eighties,



Paul Heiney and the cow that brought hope

Send a Cow has sourced its heifers with even greater care than the British Government imposed on cows for our own food.

No offspring of BSE-infected mothers were sent, and no case of BSE has appeared in Uganda. They are well trained to spot it: Dr Chris Ocen, their veterinary chief in Uganda, made it his special study while training here. Nevertheless, Send a Cow has been flooded these past weeks with concerned phone calls. "It has been a very difficult time for us," says Georgia Clark. "People have been assuming that our work will come to an end and asking if they

should now send their money to other charities." The answer is no.

This year, because of the worldwide ban on the export of British cattle, no cows will be sent from Britain. Think what this could mean for the ten families who are eagerly waiting for this year's shipment. They have worked hard building a shelter for their cow, they have cleared land on their small farms in order to grow elephant grass and other forage crops, and they have been trained in its care. It has already cost them dearly from their tiny incomes.

They have lived in hope for over a year having seen the transformation the coming of the cow has brought to the lives of others. I have seen it myself. One family I visited had put two children through university from the sale of surplus milk from just one cow.

Betty, to whom Tutti was given, can now afford to buy sugar and salt to offer her guests. It may seem little,

but it matters a lot to her. "We are trying to source good cows inside Africa itself," says Georgia Clark. "We may be able to find some in Zimbabwe, but the decision has been taken that no cows will come from Britain this year."

I would not wish to be the one to break this news to the hopeful families in Uganda for whom the expected gift of a cow is the equivalent of a major lottery win. Send the ban.

It funds artificial insemination schemes to ensure the next generation of cows and trains field workers who buzz through the bush on motorcycles offering advice to cow owners.

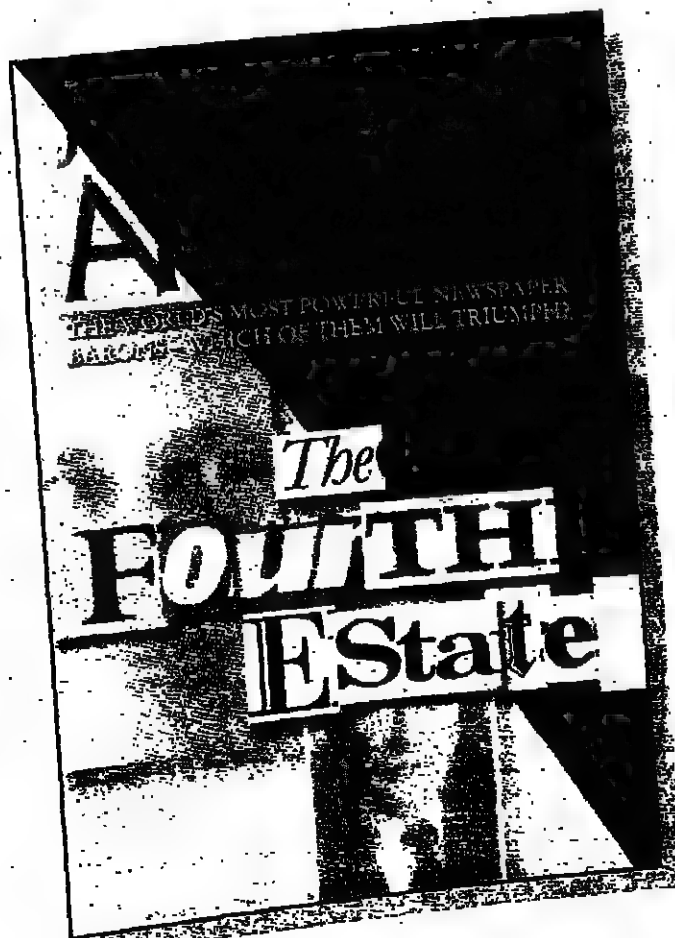
But until the ban on the export of British cattle is lifted, the unique gift of the cow is on hold. Alas, as the Archbishop will remind a silent, concerned Bristol audience this morning, the need of the Ugandans is not

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The scoop that nearly ruined us

John Grigg throws some new light on the Parnell forgery

April 18, 1887... was a fateful day in the history of *The Times*. It was the first occasion when the paper published a story under a double-column headline, but the story itself is what really matters: its consequences for the paper were profound.

The sensational feature was a facsimile letter, ostensibly written by the Irish nationalist leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, which suggested that his public denunciation of the Phoenix Park murders had been hypocritical. A week before the date on the letter, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Lord Frederick Cavendish, and his Under-Secretary, T.H. Burke, had been stabbed to death while walking in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

In the letter, the death of Cavendish was referred to as a regrettable "accident"; that of Burke as being "no more than his deserts". Appearing after three powerful articles in the paper on "Parnellism and Crime", this letter seemed to link Parnell to a recent and gruesome crime. The immediate impact of the articles, and above all of the letter, was highly beneficial to the Unionists — and *The Times*.

But this did not last long. Parnell had shown no inclination to respond to the general charge, being well aware that his movement had close connections with men of violence, and that much of the financial support for its Irish activities had come from America.

Nothing could atone for having printed the forgery

But he dismissed the letter as an "unblinking fabrication" and called for a Commons select committee to inquire into it. The Conservative Government decided instead to set up a commission of three judges to investigate the wider question. In the course of its lengthy proceedings, the facsimile letter, and others that the paper had acquired through an intermediary, were exposed as forgeries. The forger, Richard Pigott, fled the country after giving evidence, and within days shot himself in a Madrid hotel room, having confessed to his guilt.

An important incidental effect of the commission was to boost the career of H.H. Asquith, who acted as junior counsel on the Parnell side. The wide publicity that he gained in this role may have ensured his appointment straight to the senior Cabinet post of Home Secretary when Gladstone formed his last ministry in 1892.

It was very different for *The Times* and its founding dynasty, the Walters. Though the judges' eventual conclusions substantially vindicated the paper's general case, nothing could atone for the offence of the forged letters. Parnell's authority and prestige were restored, if only temporarily, while the paper, under the Walters' ownership suffered irreparable damage.

The commission cost *The Times* £200,000 (equivalent to about £10 million today), at a time when it was facing stiff competition from cheaper papers. Perhaps an even worse loss, as the official *Times*

history says, was of its "legend of inerrancy". The "awe of holy writ, which from the age of Barnes had clung about its columns, now faded away".

Barnes's successor as Editor was G.E. Buckle, who in 1887 had been in the job for only three years and was still in his early thirties. He was a clergyman's son, handsome, bearded, and with an impeccable scholarly background, including an All Souls fellowship. After the Pigott débâcle he offered to resign, but the offer was refused. He soldiered on for another quarter-century.

Meanwhile, in 1908, the Walter regime came to an end, when the ailing paper was taken over by the supreme exponent of the new journalism, Lord Northcliffe. At first, Northcliffe's attitude to Buckle was friendly, even effusive, but they were basically incompatible. A man who made a point of having no telephone on his desk was not Northcliffe's kind of journalist, though when Roy Thomson gained control of the paper in 1966, there was no television set in the office. In 1912, Buckle was pushed out and began a second career as a biographer, and as editor of Queen Victoria's letters. He died in 1935.

A collection of Buckle's papers has recently been acquired for the archive of *The Times*, from Buckle's grandson, Patrick Pirie-Gordon, who readily saw the point of keeping the collection together.

The paper's enterprising archivist, Eamon Dwyer, says the collection fills a major gap. Having gone through the papers myself, I agree with him. Buckle was in close touch with many of the leading figures of his time, political and literary. Their letters to him contain much that should interest historians.

When the "Parnellism and Crime" articles were appearing, Buckle was given police protection. A Home Office official wrote to him: "You will certainly do well to return in a Hansom — the safest mode of conveyance owing to the fact that the driver is in a position whence he can see anyone approaching the vehicle."

Patrick Pirie-Gordon remembers his grandfather well. He expected the young "to keep mentally alert". At tea, "he would produce some Latin tag or quotation to be construed by a visiting grandson". This streak of pedantry was not confined to his dealings with the young. Among the letters now in the archive is one from Arthur Balfour, leader of the Commons at the time, in which he apologises — with more than a hint of irony — for a grammatical lapse noted by Buckle: "You are quite right: 'should' ought most undoubtedly to have been 'would'..."

Balfour and Buckle were on friendly terms and played golf together. But in December 1905, when Balfour resigned as Prime Minister, he made a mistake far graver than any grammatical slip in offering Buckle a baronetcy. Buckle's reply was a polite but magisterial refusal.



Adultery versus duty

Monarchy is a demanding institution — but so is matrimony

I first met Sarah Ferguson some years before she became a duchess. She was then working in William Drummond's art gallery in Covent Garden, where I was an occasional but enthusiastic customer. When one went in to see an exhibition, one was greeted by this rather bubbly young red-haired assistant who would hand out a catalogue and ask one to sign the visitors' book. Whatever may have happened to her since, she was not then the strangely exaggerated person one now reads about in the press. She was likeable, friendly and hard-working.

That memory of her as a young woman would alone be enough to stop me joining in the chorus of criticism. I hope she will now get her life together again; at the very least, the Duchess of York obviously needs a good accountant. Nor would I want to criticise the Duke of York; I have never met him, but he seems to have behaved as well as anyone could expect in a painful situation. He has also risked his life for his country, for which one should always be grateful.

Nevertheless, there are public issues. The failure of three marriages of the Queen's children has damaged the respect for the monarchy, both in Britain and in the Commonwealth. Yet these marriage failures are typical of the state of modern marriage in Britain, which has the highest divorce rate in Europe. No doubt it is more difficult to marry into the Royal Family than into the average family, but the royal outcome is not all that much worse than that of the average citizen. There must be many other families born in the second half of this century in which there have already been three divorces; some have no doubt suffered multiple divorces, which the Royal Family has so far been spared.

The damage to the Royal Family comes from our having higher expectations of them than we have for ourselves. That is part of their role. As citizens, we may recognise that we live in a modern age, which has much more hedonistic values than earlier generations. We nevertheless expect the Royal Family to preserve the more stoical values of the period of the British Empire and the world wars. These values were exemplified by the reigns of King George V and King George VI, and by the Queen herself. They were contradicted by the brief reign of King Edward VIII, who could never understand the contemporary public resentment at

his putting personal happiness ahead of his duty to the country. His life is still an awful warning.

Monarchy depends on the ancient values system of honour and duty. It cannot function unless it commands loyalty, and loyalty can only be won by an absolute willingness to sacrifice personal inclination to public duty. Edward VIII's view that marriage to the woman he loved mattered more than the throne of England was quite incompatible with this overriding claim of duty. Yet obviously such an apparently archaic value system has been widely rejected in the contemporary world, and in its fullest sense is now hardly held by anyone. This conflict between the old and the new values threatens the survival of monarchy in every country where the institution has so far survived the many dangers of the 20th century.

Yet this conflict is at least as great a threat to marriage as it is to monarchy, and marriage is by far the more important of the two institutions. Monarchy depends on putting duty ahead of pleasure, as the Queen has done, and as her father and grandfather did before her. Marriage depends on that as well. Neither institution has a chance of success unless there is a commitment to endurance and self-sacrifice; the hedonistic calculus is equally destructive of both. Without asking Lenin's question — "Who, whom?" — there has clearly been a lot of adultery in these failed royal marriages; indeed, two of the leading figures have publicly confessed to it on television. Many of the marriages of my contemporaries have failed: in most of those failures there has been adultery on one side or both, and it has played a large part in these breakdowns. Sometimes it has been the primary and sometimes the secondary cause, but it has almost always been present.

Nowadays adultery is quite fashionable, and it is thought priggish to speak ill of such a national institution. Indeed, it has almost become a human right, to be defended by all politically correct people. Yet there is no doubt that adultery causes alienation in marriage, and lowers its resistance to the natural shocks through which, at one time or another, every marriage has to pass. In marriage, people suffer sickness, irritability and depression; they have worries about money; they worry about their children, sometimes little worries about exams and sometimes big worries about drugs or health; they quarrel over trivial things; they grow old; they are separated by business; they have to care for elderly parents, who may even be demented; they are kept awake at nights by teething babies. All these things have to be overcome. Adultery weakens the bond which allows marriage to survive these natural difficulties; it is the matrimonial equivalent of an attack on the immune system, and opens the way to many other diseases.

William Rees-Mogg

My own observation has been that human beings fall into three groups, so far as adultery is concerned. There are those for whom it is irresistible — I even knew a man who took both his new wife and his old mistress on his honeymoon; he subsequently married the mistress, and could not be faithful to her either. There are those, at the other extreme, who are naturally strongly monogamous, for whom the idea of adultery is instinctively repellent. I remember another acquaintance who said: "I no more wish to sleep with another man's wife, than I wish to clean my teeth with his toothbrush." This attitude may be commoner among women than men, but it is not unusual in either sex. Even nowadays, women often have a deeper commitment to the stability of marriage than their husbands, because the maternal bond to children is so strong.

The larger number probably lies in the middle: for most people adultery may be an occasional temptation, but not normally an irresistible one. If they are exposed to particular circumstances, such as the separations

and opportunities of wartime, they are rather likely to be unfaithful. If they live in a stable, monogamous culture, they are rather likely to remain faithful. The strength of the temptation will not override their desire to be faithful, if they have formed a conscientious belief that fidelity is an absolute condition of marriage. If there is no such belief, temptation has its chance. The culture in which they have been brought up is very important to the decision.

The late-20th-century view is that sexual pleasure has an almost pre-eminent value: it is often put higher than the more sober values of fidelity, duty, reliability, the welfare of children and so on. This has historically been a common pattern in rich and leisured societies, and relative to previous centuries, modern Britain is rich and leisured on a mass scale.

The birth control pill, despite present doubts, has liberated many women from the restraints of potential pregnancies. There is also the post-Freudian ideology, reinforced by the commercial exploitation of sex, which has made adultery seem more attractive, or even necessary to psychological health. These are the facts, welcome or unwelcome, and they cannot be wished away. We live in an age more exposed than previous ones to the allurements of adultery, and therefore more people are adulterers; these people were bound to include members of the Royal Family.

The trouble is that adultery is a powerful social solvent. It tends to wash away the cement of marriage; those who depend on the stability of marriage, particularly children, suffer great damage as a result. In the case of the Royal Family, it does further harm. It undermines royal marriages as much as other marriages, but it is predicated upon the Duke of Windsor's principle that love is more important than duty. That may be an arguable proposition in philosophy, but it is fatal to the idea of monarchy. Adultery therefore tends to wash away the trust that the public gives to members of the Royal Family, as well as the trust they have for each other in their marriages.

The stern doctrine must be that the stability of the monarchy rests on a culture of tough-minded stoicism, of putting duty first. In marriage, duty includes faithfulness. The monarchy is by nature a demanding institution — but then so is matrimony. Both repay the demands they make with great and extraordinary benefits.

Gay pride before a fall

Magnus Linklater on the homosexual who stands apart

There has been a marked lack of sympathy in Washington for Andrew Sullivan, the British editor of *New Republic* who announced simultaneously that he was resigning from the magazine and that he was infected with the HIV virus. Instead of compassion for his condition and respect for the openness with which he revealed it, Sullivan's departure has been greeted with an uncharacteristic display of Schadenfreude. His literary editor said he felt "unburdened"; others claimed that Sullivan was using the news of his infection to cloak the fact that he had been fired — a charge he angrily denies.

From what is probably the world capital of political correctness, these comments were surprisingly ungenerous. This may be because Sullivan had a tyrannical style of editing which alienated his own staff; it may also have stemmed from Sullivan's brand of assertive homosexuality. He wrote regularly about this, sometimes movingly, sometimes aggressively, and he was no stranger to personal publicity.

Last year, in his book *Virtually Normal*, he took the argument a step further, in a way which seemed to fly in the face of his title. Homosexuals, he said, were not just another section of society. "The truth is," he wrote, "homosexuals are not entirely normal; to flatten their varied and complicated lives into a single moralistic model is to miss what is essential and exhilarating about their otherness." He admitted that his homosexuality had led him gradually to lose contact with his straight or married friends, and that he had become absorbed in the gay community.

That difference had been exacerbated by AIDS. It was the homosexual's familiarity with death that ultimately set him apart. "Homosexuals in contemporary America tend to die young," he wrote. "They die surrounded by young death and by the arch symbols of cultural otherness." At the time he was writing this, he was aware that he himself was HIV-positive, though he did not mention it in the book. A routine test, taken three years ago, showed he had detected the infection in its early stage, and he has now embarked on a full course of available drugs, taking about 20 pills a day. Although he was adamant this week that AIDS is "a survivable illness", and that he is "allergic to the past tense", he has seen six friends die from the syndrome in the past year alone. "AIDS has intensified a difference that I think is inherent between homosexual and heterosexual adults," he says.

This makes uncomfortable reading. The conventional liberal view is that homosexuality is merely a variation on the sexual scale, that for a man to be gay is as acceptable as it is for him to be straight, and that in a civilised society he should encounter no more prejudice than his heterosexual counterpart. Sullivan challenges that view, and comes across as something of a sexual fundamentalist, which may not be all that surprising, considering his religious views. When Martin Peretz, proprietor of *New Republic*, introduced Sullivan as editor, he announced that he was "Catholic, working-class, British, Tory and gay" — in that order.

Catholicism approaches homosexuality from a different, but no less rigid standpoint. It is the present Pope's strongly held opinion that it is "a disorder". That was echoed only last week by Scotland's leading Roman Catholic, Cardinal Tom Winning, who said that although a man's sexual orientation might be created by God, so were other handicaps, "like a wooden leg". This caused great offence among homosexuals, not just because of the crudeness of the analogy, but because it appeared to allow no tolerance, no variation in a man's sexual make-up. Some homosexuals, like many heterosexuals, are far less clear-cut about their feelings than Cardinal Winning appears to allow. They can and do change. They may, like Sullivan, want to assert their own sexuality and challenge social convention from the other side of the barricade. But they may, on the other hand, want to be accepted and absorbed without feeling the need to fight a running battle.

In some ways the Vatican view is easy to understand. Offensive or not, there is no doubting what it means. Sullivan, on the other hand, is the editor of a magazine which is the flagship of intellectual liberalism. He has campaigned for the homosexual cause, and has written passionately about its present state. And yet, by placing it outside the bounds of normal society, by emphasising the differences between it and what the rest of us consider normal, he is erecting barriers rather than demolishing them, encouraging prejudice against the gay community rather than reducing it.

It is a difficult and complex view to promote. Perhaps in the end both editor and proprietor felt that *New Republic* was the wrong place in which to do it.

Aitken heart

IN A reconciliation worthy of a handshake on the White House lawn, Jonathan Aitken and the Thatchers are back on terms. At the launch of Carol Thatcher's biography of her father, Sir Denis, on Tuesday, Aitken and the Thatcher ensemble were like peas in a pod.

Almost two decades ago, Aitken, MP for Thanet South, and Miss Thatcher were the glamour couple of Conservative circles. Then the relationship ended. Miss Thatcher

was said to be devastated, and her mother is said to have laid the blame squarely at Aitken's door. His notable absence from her Governments was often put down to this ill-starred affair.

It was not until Aitken's 18th year in Parliament that John Major finally found a ministerial post for him at the Ministry of Defence. As recently as last autumn, when a party was held at No 10 for Baroness Thatcher's 70th birthday, Aitken was

noticeably invited only to pre-dinner drinks.

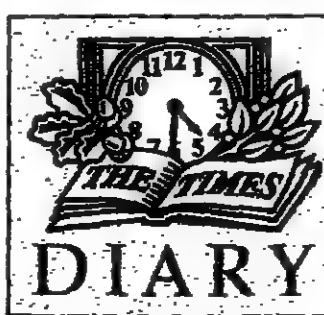
Now the freeze is over. At the book launch, held in the East India Club in St James's, Aitken was busy chatting away to Miss Thatcher and her youthful ski-instructor boyfriend. It even emerged that he had helped by reading proofs of the book.

What is more, Aitken has been entertaining the Thatchers at his home. "I had Margaret and Denis down for lunch just the other day," he said. "Denis liked it because I'm right on the edge of the Royal St. George's course at Sandwich. He always likes a round."

But Sir Denis has been forced by arthritis to give up the game he loves. He explained: "I restricted myself to playing the 19th hole."

Sheen the light

AS CONVERSIONS to Christianity go, Charlie Sheen's ranks with the Damascene. The American actor and one-time favourite client of the Hollywood madam Heidi Fleiss, recently abandoned his wife of six months, the model Dorena Pelee. Now, this wildest of the young Hollywood set claims to have found God and been "saved". Describing his new-found faith to an American magazine, Sheen



says: "It's so far beyond me... it's so much more powerful than anything I can control that I have to surrender."

Top tips

THE publication of President Clinton's latest bedtime reading list casts some light on his burgeoning foreign policy interest. His Irish republican sympathies may have been bolstered by Thomas Cahill's book *How the Irish Saved Civilization*.

The President's chats with the new Israeli Prime Minister were probably helped by a skim through Shimon Peres's regional analysis, *The New Middle East*. Last year's American flurry in the former Yugoslavia was doubtless helped along by a perusal of the only British writer to make it onto the presidential reading list, Noel Malcolm with his Bosnia: *A Short History*.

● Mary Whitehouse, turn away. Showing at the National Film Theatre, virtually uncensored for the first time, is *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom*, the last and most famously disgusting film of the debauched Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini. A quite foully sadistic vision of Mussolini's republic, the film has been described even by its fans as very difficult to sit through. "The NFT audience is film-literate and will see it in its context," says the theatre. "You'd be bored if you were only looking for titillation."

● The *Friends of Kenwood House and English Heritage* are not altogether happy with one another. The problem? A carpet. *English Heritage* says that it cannot afford to pay a full-time curator at Kenwood House because it is facing a cut in its grant, yet it has spent £10,000 on an unspectacular modern carpet from John Lewis for just one room, measuring roughly 18ft by 12ft. "That's half a year's salary for a curator," says one furious friend. "It shows their ineptitude."

Hot heads

AS John Major flies off to Prague, Moscow and Kiev, we can only hope he has learnt from the fashion errors of previous trips. As my picture shows, the Prime Minister and his then Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, simply don't look happy in Russian headgear. Peasant extras from *Battleship Potemkin* perhaps — but statesmen, no. At least on this trip the PM can rely on style tips from Roy Reeve, our Ambassador to Ukraine. Until his latest posting, the bearded Reeve preferred a Harley Davidson to his official car. His search for a Ukrainian bike suit-



A fur cry from style

able for the icy roads, however, has so far proved fruitless.

● The *Friends of Kenwood House and English Heritage* are not altogether happy with one another. The problem? A carpet. *English Heritage* says that it cannot afford to pay a full-time curator at Kenwood House because it is facing a cut in its grant, yet it has spent £10,000 on an unspectacular modern carpet from John Lewis for just one room, measuring roughly 18ft by 12ft. "That's half a year's salary for a curator," says one furious friend. "It shows their ineptitude."

P-H-S



Jonathan and Carol, back in harmony

In 1941 he offered this, still at that time modest, fleet to the Allies, while he himself joined the Greek Navy. For



In 1956, when expatriate shipowners were urged to invest in Greece to help in their fatherland's economic development, he bid for the concession of the Greek national airlines, but lost to Aristotle Onassis, who went on to set up Olympic Airways. In 1957, however, he spent £8.5 million to build Hellenic Shipyards, a shipbuilding and repairing installation at Skaramanga, near Piraeus. By then he was regarded as one of the wealthiest men in the world. He owned villas in Paris, London, New York, the Bahamas and on the French Riviera, but preferred to live mostly at St Moritz where he had set up an extraordinary communications centre to keep an eye on the activities of his vast shipping empire.

But the deal was called off because of the sterling crisis which had made the American buyers hesitant, since most

He is survived by the three sons and daughter of his marriage to Evgenia, and by the daughter of his marriage to Charlotte Ford.

SIR WILLIAM WILKINSON

Joining the NCC at a critical stage in its development, he brought a new dimension to its activity, through his experience in finance and administration. He won the organisation a huge increase in budget, and gave a quality of leadership that carried it through to



The plan was seen through into law by Ridley's successor, Chris Patten. Wilkinson delivered a scathing speech about the Government's action when he presented the council's final annual report in November 1990, and was given a standing ovation.

After the demise of the NCC, Wilkinson spent his last years

light in wild nature, as when he was taken to see, however imperfectly, the charming double terel nesting on the high mountain tops, and the Flow Country which he had fought so hard to save from the plantations of conifers.

William Wilkinson is survived by his wife, and by his son and two daughters.

SIR STEPHEN MILLER

A MAN of remarkable surgical skill coupled with an impressive capacity for organisation, Stephen Miller achieved renown both within his profession as an ophthalmic surgeon and in related fields outside it. While a consultant at St George's Hospital he worked also at Moorfields Eye Hospital to establish the first glaucoma

Stephen James Hamilton Miller was born in Arbroath, Tayside. The eldest of the family, he was a studious child and to those who did not know him may have seemed a little distant. His headmaster described him in a school

limited ophthalmic experience, he was appointed to the position of ophthalmic specialist at the RN Auxiliary Hospital, Kilmacollm, one of the

the RAF personnel on the island in addition to his naval duties. This contact with Lyle

It was at this time that he once more sought the advice of Keith Lyle, who urged him to start again at the bottom of the

ophthalmic unit second to none, using funds from the Frost Charitable Trust, of which he was chairman, to purchase new equipment.



Miller served as a governor of Moorfields Eye Hospital from 1961 to 1967 and again from 1974 to 1977. He was Master of the Oxford Ophthalmic Congress, 1969-70, and received the Doyne Medal in 1972 and the Montgomery

quate. Miller embarked upon a campaign to bring the work of the hospital to the attention of a wider audience. He achieved enormous success. When he retired as Hospitalier in 1990, the hospital had been re-equipped to the standards of a London teaching hospital and the capital account had been increased to more than £6 million. He was appointed a Knight of the Order of St John in 1978 and Bailiff Grand Cross in 1987.

books, including *Modern Trends in Ophthalmology* (1973), *Operative Surgery* (1976) and *Diseases of the Eye* (1978).
Miller's main sporting interest was golf, but in his retirement he took up again a boyhood pastime of fishing. He also played the piano.
He is survived by his wife Heather, whom he married in 1949, and by their three sons, the youngest of whom is now a consultant at Moorfields Eye Hospital.

PERSONAL COLUMN

[illegible]

THE ABUSE OF TIPPING.

As the practice of tipping has widened its scope by conquering the new world, it has also become a social custom over those who live in old countries where the *pourboire* has long been an established institution. For example, consider the fashion of tipping in the better-class London restaurants. Ten years ago a piece of silver was always sufficient to awaken the waiter's smile; a few coppers were a sufficient guarantee that he would bring you your hat and coat with the requisite deference. To-day, the waiter at any good West-end restaurant expects from 15 to 20 per cent of the amount of your bill. Anything less is a disgraceful insult, which the boldest of us, from intended to imply that you are a "gent" rather than a gentleman. The waiter, poor fellow, is not to be blamed for thus endeavouring to keep up the local standard of tipping. The management, which pays him no wages or even exacts a payment from him and so casts the burden of his maintenance on the public, is really to blame for the system. Not a few of the places where, a few years ago, one could dine with simplicity and economy, at a restaurant, have been spoiled for the service of moderate means by the lavish pursuit of wealthy foreigners who leave a

ON THIS DAY

April 18, 1908

When to tip, whom to tip and how much are problems which can face people today, just as they did in the Edwardian spring of 1908. In country house circles it seems to have been felt that the chauffeur, the 'spoilt darling of the servants' hall', had rather got above himself.

meteoric trail of gold and silver donations behind them as they "streak" through our poor, patient metropolis . . .

But it is in certain country houses that one observes the most odious abuses of tipping. Time was when the man of moderate means could always accept an invitation to spend the week-end at some well-to-do friend's country seat or to enjoy a day's shooting. In the former case a single pound would cover all necessary donations; in the latter, a sovereign to the headkeeper and half-sovereigns, or even what the cabmen call "dollars," to his underlings were amply sufficient. In these days, however,

five times as much is expected and paid as a matter of course. If, for example, you tip the chauffeur who takes you from and to the station on the same scale as, or on a less scale than, previous visits in days before the motor-car arrived, you tipped the groom who drove the dogcart, his manner of acceptance is apt to be positively impertinent. The chauffeur is still a spoilt darling of the servants' hall, though in the best houses successful efforts are being made to reduce his *status* to that of old-fashioned coachman, who, even if he is disappointed in the size of his tip, seldom or never allows his resentment to displace his magnanimity. The standard of taxation in country houses has now become so exorbitant that it is more economical to spend one's weekends at a good hotel. As for shooting invitations, no man of small means can afford to accept them. The impudence of under-tipped keepers sometimes passes all bounds. A friend of mine, who offered two sovereigns to a headkeeper, received the amazing answer of a hand placed behind the back—a most elegant refusal to take the gift—and the significant words, "It is not for me."

That was to say, nothing less than a £5 note should have been offered to this dignitary, who, to do him justice, had shown the party the best of sport...



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What a Blair government would mean for business



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A new policy to protect the beasts of the bush



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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY APRIL 18 1996

Huge regulatory hurdles to be overcome before offer can be made for generator

Americans plan National Power bid

By Christine Buckley

SOUTHERN Company, the US utility, yesterday appeared poised to reshape the electricity industry after confirming its intentions to take over National Power, Britain's largest electricity generator.

The move by the Atlanta company puts pressure on the Government, just as it is making its mind up on whether National Power and PowerGen should be allowed to take over regional electricity companies.

A full takeover by Southern of National Power could be worth up to £3 billion and is expected if the generators' bids for the regional electricity companies are cleared. Such a ratification would endorse the combination of generation and distribution in electricity and be crucial for Southern, which already owns the UK regional company South Western Electricity (Sweb).

Southern is now believed to be talking with the Department of Trade and Industry and other authorities such as the Office of Electricity Regulation and the Office of Fair Trading. It will be seeking to persuade the Government to allow Tim Eggar, the Energy Minister, to relinquish the golden share it holds in the generators, which prohibits



Eggar: golden share

stakes of more than 15 per cent. The move by Southern first faces considerable regulatory hurdles and a whiplash of political and consumer concern.

Labour called for a halt to the "ad hoc" restructuring of the industry and demanded a

chance of moving on Southern Electric, for which the UK generator has bid. Although sources close to the US company reject that as the ultimate aim, the fit between National Power and Southern (UK) is better regarded than a link with Sweb, a stake in which Southern is looking to sell.

If the DTI throws out the generators' bids for the regional companies, thereby scuppering Southern of the US plans for vertical integration Southern could turn its attention to water, it is believed.

Some analysts in the City, which is divided over whether Southern will easily clear regulatory obstacles, believe the aggressive company is moving for the option on an all-out assault on the UK electricity industry and could want control over National Power, Southern (UK) and an interest in Sweb.

Southern rushed out a statement after midnight talks between Tom Boren, chief executive of its overseas division and John Baker, chairman, and Keith Henry, chief executive of National Power. Its next step will come after the ruling by Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, on the generators' takeovers.

While a price still has to be negotiated, Mr Baker is already looking at a profit of nearly £900,000 on share options held. Mr Henry, who joined the company recently, does not have options disclosed in the annual report.

National Power was reluctant to comment yesterday beyond stressing that Southern could not move until after the DTI ruling.

Southern said only that it was interested in a combination of the businesses although a takeover is thought the only route. The DTI said a review of its golden share would be taken if there was a need to do so. It declined an assurance that it would hold on to the share which is timeless.



Southern Electric International

Tom Boren, Southern's overseas chief executive, met National Power chiefs at midnight



John Baker, left, who is looking at £900,000 in share options, with Keith Henry

A tough company from the South

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

SOUTHERN of Atlanta, Georgia, is one of the largest and most aggressive of the US utilities. Its markets stretch far across the American South. It is the parent of five electricity concerns and involved in cable and telecom joint ventures and nuclear power.

In 1991, it sacked Jeffrey Hamburg as head of Southern Electric International, its overseas subsidiary, for "alleged unethical business practices" connected with an SEI bid for a Portuguese power plant. Mr Hamburg sued for \$20 million for defamation, arguing that he was a scapegoat in the company's attempt to prove that it was whiter than white.

When it sacked Mr Hamburg the company said that it was anxious to maintain a clean record in business practices. This was hardly surprising since in the late 1980s it had been charged with several ethical and tax violations that had attracted the scrutiny of the taxmen and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

It is natural that the ambitions of such a large company should turn to foreign markets, particularly at a time when tight regulation at home is making it harder to earn the kind of profits to which Southern is used. It was typical of Southern's aggression that it was the first US company to buy a British utility, leading the way to a spate of bids by other American companies.

Its ownership of South Western Electricity (Sweb) has also encountered controversy via Sweb's aggressive marketing campaign in the run-up to competition in the domestic gas market in the South West. The campaign drew a large number of complaints and Sweb was forced to withdraw its doorstep sales drive.

Southern applied to the SEC last year for exemption from a rule that prevents American utilities from earning over 50 per cent of their profits from overseas. Last year, its earnings topped \$1 billion, with revenues of more than \$7 billion.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FT-SE 100	3805.8	(-18.7)
Yield	3.50%	
FT-SE All share	1287.37	(-5.81)
Nikkei	21815.22	(-51.98)
New York		
Dow Jones	8583.88	(-36.13)
S&P Composite	941.98	(-3.03)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	8 1/4%	(8 1/4%)
Yield	8.51%	(8.70%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-month Interbank	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Life long bill	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
Mature (Jan)	10 1/2%	(10 1/2%)
STERLING		
New York	1.5080*	(1.5077)
London		
£	1.5088	(1.5088)
DM	2.2737	(2.2737)
FF	7.7240	(7.7288)
SFr	1.9486	(1.9552)
Yen	163.28	(163.12)
£ index	83.6	(83.6)
DOLLARS		
London		
DM	1.5088*	(1.5100)
FF	8.1180*	(8.1242)
SFr	1.2258*	(1.2300)
Yen	108.29*	(108.22)
\$ index	98.5	(98.5)
Tokyo close Yen	108.55	
WORLD-SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Jul)	\$17.88	(\$18.40)
GOLD		
London close	\$391.28	(\$392.85)
* denotes midday trading price		

Woolwich meets

The Peter Robinson affair is likely to dominate today's annual meeting of the Woolwich Building Society. However, lawyers acting for Mr Robinson said the former chief executive would not attend. The issues to be raised include the external report now being prepared by KPMG, the accountant, and Linklaters & Paines, the solicitor, on the circumstances of Mr Robinson's departure. One Woolwich member will, however, miss a wedding to attend the meeting. Page 27, Diary 29

Sea Empress

The environmental and economic costs of the Sea Empress disaster on the coast near Milford Haven two months ago could be as high as £64 million, according to estimates provided by the oil industry. Page 30

Unemployment figures falling 'steadily' at 10,000 a month

By Philip Bassett, Industrial Editor

THE Government maintained that unemployment is falling at a steady rate of about 10,000 a month after a surprise rise in joblessness announced last month was followed yesterday by a larger-than-expected fall of 25,700 in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit.

But in spite of the better news on jobs, Whitehall and the City were concerned about a rise in average earnings growth — the first for eight months.

Last month's increase in

claimant unemployment was also revised downwards yesterday, from 6,800 to 3,500.

Gillian Shepherd, the Employment and Education Secretary, said that the two months' figures were consistent with the assessment by the Office for National Statistics of a downward trend of about 10,000 a month. "Britain has now entered its fourth successive year of steady growth in jobs and falling unemployment," she said.

Average earnings rose after

seven months of flat growth of 3.25 per cent. Revisions to the figures mean that for the last month or two, earnings in manufacturing and service industries are now seen as rising at a rate of 3.5 per cent — the rate at which earnings across the economy are now increasing.

Some City analysts suggested that the upturn in average earnings growth could be the start of a continuing trend because the rise — albeit a gentle one — in pay settle-

ments has not yet fed through into earnings growth.

Yesterday's fall in the unemployed count — the 35th in 39 months — takes unemployment to its lowest level since April 1991. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate fell from 7.9 to 7.8 per cent of the workforce, its lowest level since May 1991.

Whitehall officials suggested that the ending of industrial action by civil servants, the continuing impact of invalidity benefit and a five-week month all had an impact on the size of the fall. Unadjusted unemployment in March fell 72,167 to 2,330,799.

Michael Meacher, Labour's Shadow Employment Secretary, attacked the Government over the fall, saying: "Government ministers may make much of any fall in the unemployment figures, just as they try to ignore any rise. Of course, the movement in the official figures is now too erratic to draw any firm conclusions."

Don Foster, Liberal Democrat employment spokesman, said the figures showed that "Britain's economy remains in a fragile and lacklustre state".

New manufacturing jobs figures showed rising employment, and separate statistics from the Government's quarterly Labour Force Survey for the three months to February showed a 94,000 fall in unemployment and a 118,000 rise in employment.

PIA aims to hasten mis-selling review

By Robert Miller

THE City watchdog responsible for overseeing the £4 billion personal pensions mis-selling review has given warning of a "serious" disciplinary crackdown on firms failing to make "sufficiently rapid progress".

The warning from the Personal Investment Authority, which polices firms selling direct to the public, coincided with details of the first compensation payments to be made for mis-selling personal pensions announced by the Investors Compensation Scheme. Of seven firms "declared in default" by the ICS, a mechanism to trigger compensation payments, Du Bara Investments and Individual Savings & Insurance Services are understood to involve more than 1,000 transfer cases. This is where investors were advised to leave generous occupational schemes for a private plan.

In the case of Du Bara, it is understood that dozens of former miners, who had been made redundant by their colliery in Nantgarw, Mid Glamorgan, were approached to leave the Mineworkers Pension Scheme in 1989.

The PIA said that, to date, about a million cases of mis-selling had been identified, of which 392,000 were in the priority category. So far, compensation has been offered in 7,000 cases and £6.7 million has been paid out.

Further rate cut unlikely

By Janet Bush, Economics Correspondent

KENNETH CLARKE, the Chancellor, and Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, agreed to cut rates at their monetary meeting last month, but both said they stand ready to raise rates again if necessary.

Their statements, contained in the minutes of the March 7 meeting published yesterday, convinced the money markets that no more cuts in base rates can now be expected. Sterling futures had priced in another 1/4-point cut, but moved sharply away from that view yesterday.

The minutes coincided with the latest economic outlook from the International

Monetary Fund which said that it saw little room, if any at all, for further cuts in UK interest rates. This is in spite of predicting growth this year of only 2.2 per cent, well below the Treasury's prediction.

Pennington 27

In yesterday's minutes, Mr George recommended a 1/4-point cut to 6 per cent at the March meeting, but said rates may have to be raised at some point further ahead if monetary growth did not moderate and if there was

clearer evidence that growth had begun to accelerate.

Mr Clarke was neutral. Although he said that he stood ready to put rates up later this year if necessary, he said his position remained "that he would continue to be ready to move rates in either direction as the evidence justified".

The markets interpreted the remarks, along with recent data on the economy suggesting a genuine pick-up in consumer demand, as calling the end of lower rates in this economic cycle. The markets are now looking for base rates of about 7.25 per cent in a year's time.

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IMF says slowdown poses threat to EMU

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

THE International Monetary Fund yesterday expressed concern that the economic slowdown in Europe is compromising the ability of Germany, France and others to meet the criteria for monetary union in 1999.

In its semi-annual *World Economic Outlook*, the fund revised down its forecast for world growth this year to 3.8 per cent from the 4.1 per cent it had expected in October, a move that largely reflected disappointing developments in the European economies.

The fund said that there is room for further reductions in interest rates in Europe to boost growth and counterbalance the dampening effect on economic growth of budget deficit cutting programmes, designed to meet the Maastricht treaty's fiscal criteria for entry into monetary union.

It said that the fiscal targets are still feasible provided economic growth picks up as it expects. The fund is projecting that world growth will recover

to 4.3 per cent in 1997. Germany, expected to grow by just 1 per cent this year, should see growth of 2.9 per cent in 1997 while French growth should accelerate from 1.3 per cent this year to 2.8 per cent next year.

But the fund said that it will not be easy to hit the Maastricht targets and that there could be more turbulence ahead for the French franc.

"Qualification by a sufficiently large number of countries is by no means assured," it said, suggesting that the fiscal targets might be interpreted liberally to ensure that monetary union goes ahead on schedule.

It suggested, for example, that governments should focus on the structural component of their deficits rather than actual deficits which have been swelled by extra social security and unemployment benefit payments because of economic slowdown.

The European growth problem specifically relates to those countries whose currencies shadow the mark closely. Countries outside the exchange-rate mechanism have outperformed those inside it. Britain and Italy being prime examples. It suggested that there was scope for some appreciation in both sterling and the lira.

The fund predicted steady American growth, forecasting 1.8 per cent growth this year and 2.2 per cent in 1997. But it said that there was a significant risk to the US recovery if President Clinton and Congress fail to reach agreement on balancing the US budget.

The IMF was also positive about Japan, with growth of 2.7 per cent predicted for this year and 3.1 per cent next year. This compares with only 0.9 per cent in 1995. The fund applauded the sharp fall in the yen after the record levels seen a year ago.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia \$	2.02	1.82
Austria Sch	17.02	16.83
Belgium Fr	48.79	48.49
Canada \$	2.187	1.927
Cyprus Cyp£	0.790	0.885
Denmark Kr	9.41	8.81
Finland Mk	7.73	7.08
France Fr	8.14	7.49
Germany Dm	2.43	2.22
Greece Dr	367.00	368.00
Hong Kong \$	12.31	11.21
Ireland P	1.02	0.84
Israel Shk	5.1900	4.5400
Italy Lira	2481.00	2295.00
Japan Yen	177.70	161.70
Malta £	0.561	0.528
Netherlands Gld	2.889	2.489
New Zealand \$	2.38	2.14
Norway Kr	10.42	9.82
Portugal Esc	245.00	228.50
S Africa Rd	6.55	6.08
Spain Ptas	197.00	184.00
Sweden Kr	10.81	10.01
Switzerland Fr	1.39	1.21
Turkey Lira	116882	107582
USA \$	1.608	1.475

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Lord Tugendhat said the home loans market showed signs of only a moderate pick-up

Abbey chief cautious on housing market

By ROBERT MULLER

LORD Tugendhat, chairman of Abbey National, yesterday cautioned against an over-optimistic view on prospects for the UK housing market this year.

He told the bank's annual meeting that while the level of mortgage applications received had been "encouraging" the home loans market as a whole still only showed signs of a "moderate pick-up".

Lord Tugendhat, whose salary rose to £263,762 last year against £242,393 in 1994, said that the Abbey National Bank Account continued to perform well, with an average of more than 10,000 new accounts being opened every month. Abbey National has also issued 30,000 of its new Visa credit cards since the February launch.

Lord Tugendhat said that the two major fiscal milestones in 1995 were a pre-tax profit of more than £1 billion and the rise in assets to top £100 billion. The 2.4 million shareholders, who can expect a dividend payout of 21.75p per share for the full year, have seen the value of 100 free shares handed out at the time of the former building society's stock market conversion in July 1989 more than quadruple, Lord Tugendhat said.

Voting on the proposed takeover of the National & Provincial Building Society last week attracted an impressive turnout, with 83 per cent of eligible savers and 71 per cent of borrowers voting in favour of the deal.

Small firms more optimistic

By PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

BRITAIN'S small businesses are showing signs of economic recovery, and their support for the Conservatives is growing, according to new survey evidence today.

Ministers will be pleased by the findings of the latest survey from Kingston University's Small Business Research Centre, one of the principal small business study centres in Britain, suggesting increased optimism and performance by small companies.

The Government and Labour have both been targeting the small business vote with a range of policy initiatives, and the latest Kingston study is the first measure of small companies' voting intentions since the two main political parties intensified their campaigns in advance of the forthcoming general election.

Previous surveys by Kingston have shown that, while the Conservatives are the most popular party, small business

support for the Tories is about half the level it was in the early 1980s and that the gap between the parties has been narrowing.

But the latest Kingston survey for Office World, the stationery supply company, shows improved support for the Conservatives — up from 27.5 per cent last November to almost 32 per cent now.

Labour's support is steady at 26.5 per cent, while the Liberal Democrats have slipped from

14.9 to 13.7 per cent. Almost 30 per cent of small business owners refuse to give any voting commitment.

However, small firms are feeling more confident. Their optimism about the economy has leapt from 39 per cent in November to 56 per cent in what the study says is the first sign of an improving "feel-good" factor since the summer of 1994. Small firms are also more optimistic about taking on new employees.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Lloyd's application to postpone lost

LLOYD'S of London yesterday lost its application to postpone a crucial High Court action on the grounds that a delay would not disadvantage the market's attempt to settle with its litigating names. The case centred on whether Lloyd's has the right to seize directly any court awards made to successful litigants. That is rather than names receiving the compensation awards and deploying the funds as they see fit. Thousands of litigating names have already won damages from a string of High Court actions. However, the funds are being held in escrow until the outcome of Lloyd's £2.8 billion-plus settlement offer is known. In an attempt to capture the money directly, Lloyd's amended names' premium trust deeds and it is the legality of this change that is being tested.

Designs on a quote

DONNA KARAN is joining other fashion designers who have launched shares on the stock market recently, taking advantage of the boom in luxury goods. The New York designer plans a global share offering worth about £230 million in the early summer. This is the second attempt. The original offer in August 1993 was pulled after the retailing downturn. Donna Karan had sales of \$510 million last year. Morgan Stanley and Bear Stearns are lead managers.

Havelock Europa ahead

HAVELOCK EUROPA, the maker of bank and shop interiors, saw profits rise 32 per cent to £5.3 million before tax. Bank of Scotland was its main customer as it replaced 1980s-style bullet-proof glass counters with open-plan, carpeted suites in 50 branches. Deals with Lloyds TSB and the Co-operative Bank almost quadrupled Havelock's banking sector, providing 44 per cent of turnover. The total dividend rises to 3.6p a share from 3p, with a 2.4p final. Earnings were 13.5p a share (11.2p).

TeleWest to take on 1,000

TELEWEST COMMUNICATIONS, the largest cable company, plans to add about 1,000 employees this year, raising its workforce to 5,000, as it expands its network. Most of the jobs will be created in engineering and installation, customer services and sales and marketing. Separately, Nynex CableComms, the industry's second-largest player, said it had raised its cable TV and cable telephony penetration rates in the quarter to March 31. Total revenues rose 92 per cent to £32.5 million.

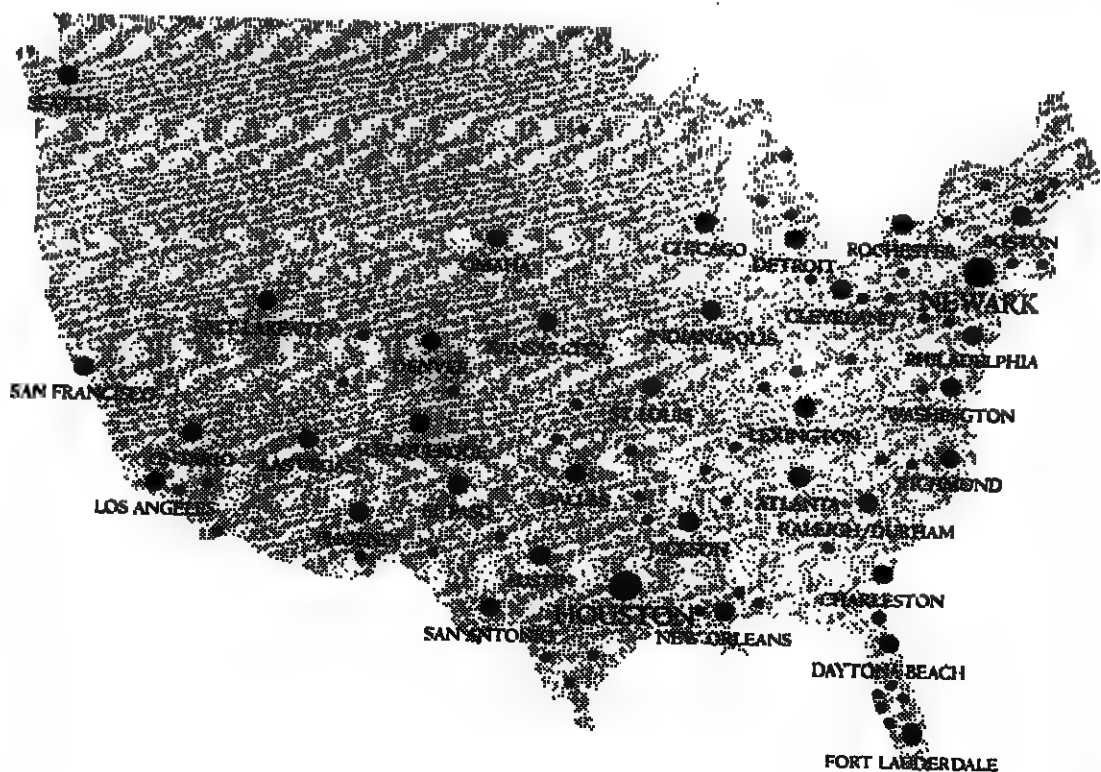
LDV accelerates

LDV, the van manufacturer, launched out of the collapsed Leyland DAF group, said pre-tax profits for 1995 rose £5 million to £23.2 million after a 43 per cent increase in turnover. Vehicle sales rose 21 per cent to more than 15,000 last year, with exports starting to have an increasingly beneficial impact on the company's trading performance, according to Allan Amey, the chief executive. LDV has created 500 new jobs and doubled output over the past three years.

New look AT&T results

AT&T, reporting results for the first time since it announced an important restructuring, lifted first-quarter profits 14 per cent to \$1.4 billion. The results omit subsidiaries it plans to sell or demerge. The earnings, equal to 90 cents a share, came on revenue of \$12.9 billion. A year earlier, the comparable units of AT&T earned profits of \$1.3 billion, or 80 cents a share, on revenue of \$12.4 billion. With the other units included, AT&T earned \$1.362 billion (\$1.198 billion), or 85 (76) cents a share.

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"Patients who cannot accept an offered admission date are said to be self-deferred and returned to the bottom of the in-patient WAITING LIST."

(SOURCE: "Waiting Times: Monitoring the Total Performance of the NHS", by TONY DAVIS & YOUNG DAVIES, MEDICAL JOURNAL, Sept 3 '94, p. 658)

"Waiting... Waiting lists do not always arise through mismanagement of resources, they arise because resources are inadequate."

(SOURCE: "Waiting Times for Hospital Treatment: What All That Means and What It Means for the NHS", by the Royal College of Radiologists, 1994, p. 14-15, 1994)

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Signet long-term

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THE HOSPITAL SAY
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DTI must act on power mergers City goes sour on rate cuts The great ostrich disaster

Electric shock treatment

□ THERE is a pleasing irony about Southern creating the most serious political problem yet for the Government from the round of utilities bids. For this was the company which, in a serious misjudgment, was first allowed into the sheep pen.

The Americans launched the first successful bid for a British regional electricity company in July. That bid should have been blocked to allow a thorough inquiry into the carve-up of British utilities that was clearly inevitable. It was not, mainly because no one in authority could think of a good reason.

The bid opened the gates for all the others, each more suspect politically. The defining moment was when the first approach by a generator for a regional company, the ScottishPower assault on Manweb, was waved through. By the time the DTI had got up the nerve to put a couple to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, the carve-up was beyond stopping.

So the situation now throws up several embarrassing anomalies. As this column pointed out only yesterday, Southern as an American is rather better placed to take control of the country's biggest power generator than most indigenous rivals. This is because any American offer, on pure competition grounds, should be allowed, but any

British bidder will almost inevitably be operating in a similar industry, so the interests of competition policy require a reference to the MMC.

The second embarrassment is that a Southern bid could be referred or blocked entirely on public interest grounds — had the Government, not once but twice, tacitly accepted such a move. In 1991, ahead of privatisation, PowerGen's directors were cutting up nasty; they were threatened with purchase by Hanson, an Anglo-American combine. Earlier this year British Energy were doing likewise; enter Duke, a Texan utility, as possible buyer and with ministers' blessing.

So there is no logical reason to block any bid, should it emerge and should Southern, as it has promised, ration itself to the regional company already in the bag, South Western. How the DTI must wish there was. It is probably as well that the Energy Minister there, Tim Eggar, is not standing for re-election next time. But the sight of US mega-utilities rampaging through the electricity industry sacking

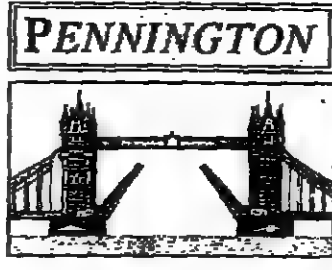
people as they go will not play well in marginal constituencies.

The timing of any Southern bid for National Power is going to be tricky, as the two generators' own approaches on Midlands and Southern of the UK are still tentative. As the whole world knows what line the MMC has taken, a swift DTI decision is essential. This would allow firm bids to be made and agreed, and Southern of the US to make its move. Shareholders in National Power and Southern UK could then reach what decisions they choose. There is quite enough uncertainty in the markets already.

Turning point for the markets

□ THE latest batch of economic figures may come to be regarded as something of a turning point, for yesterday the financial markets finally gave up hope of another cut in interest rates in this economic cycle.

The ingredients in this change of heart included another healthy drop in headline un-



PENNINGTON

employment, but monthly figures are bouncing around wildly at the moment and it is hard to establish a firm trend. Then there was the long-awaited nudge up in average earnings growth from the 3.25 per cent which has prevailed since last April to 3.5 per cent.

Earnings growth has returned to the rate seen last June and is still below those prevailing in late 1994 and early 1995. But the 3.25 per cent figure has been an increasingly cherished talisman for Britain's inflation optimists, who saw it as an indication that the lid was firmly on, so some kind of spell may have been broken by yesterday's numbers.

There was the assertion in the minutes of the March 7 mon-

etary meeting by both Ken Clarke and Eddie George that, although they were cutting rates now, they stood by to raise them again if necessary. This is no more than a statement of the obvious, in the same way that a prospective warns shareholders that prices go down as well as up.

The stock and gilt markets were reacting, therefore, in their usual kneejerk way, to the mere mention of higher rates — even if no betting man in the City expects higher rates ahead of an election. The closer that date gets, the harder it will be for the Chancellor to tighten money without sending his party into paroxysms. No politician behind in the polls wants their man to don the economic hair shirt.

What, then, of the view, widespread in the City until yesterday, that one more rate cut was in the bag? It may still be that current manufacturing doldrums may reverse the favourable trends in employment and justify another cut. But if the economy carries on growing, after a fashion at least, there seems little mileage left in the belief, given that warfare in the

building society industry is delivering low mortgage rates without the need for a move from the Chancellor.

Investors who stick heads in the sand

□ PROFESSOR Jim Gower, architect of the Financial Services Act, summed it up. The object of the Act, he said, was not to prevent fools losing their money, but to prevent reasonable people being made fools of.

This is one reason why ostriches do not rate a mention in the FSA. Another is that a decade ago no one could envisage investing in them, any more than in a collection of classic cars or any of the other off-the-wall ideas that have parted investors from their money since then.

It is possible to feel real sympathy for those who have put up to £75,000, in some cases their life savings, into the Ostrich Farming Corporation, now the subject of great bitterness, of a winding-up order by the DTI. It is not possible to understand such foolishness. Investment

spans a vast spectrum from the downright idiotic at one extreme, Nigerian scam letters and their like, to legitimate bonds and shares at the other, and the rewards that are claimed always reflect the degree of risk.

At various points along this spectrum, but all clearly at the riskier and more rewarding end, have been classic cars, timeshare apartments, BCCI and Barlow Clowes, even a weekly flutter on the National Lottery. Ostriches too were situated at the speculative end of that spectrum, and comments in the financial press reflected this high risk.

The recriminations that have followed the collapse of the Ostrich Farming Corporation, as investors attempt to identify and take possession of the birds they thought they owned, do not change these simple rules of investment. Nor, one suspects, do they prevent the whole sorry story being repeated again and again elsewhere.

The next bet

□ SPEAKING of the naive hopes of some investors, a caller to this office yesterday had this simple inquiry. Did we know which building societies were still independent — and which would be the next to be taken over? No, but if you ever find out, do let us know.



Open to offers: Signet, headed by James McAdam, is considering bids for H Samuel and Ernest Jones

Signet results could end long-term financial crisis

By PAUL DURMAN

THE rebel shareholders in Signet Group, the jeweller that owns H Samuel and Ernest Jones, believe yesterday's good results offer the company a chance to put an end to its long-running financial crisis.

Julian Treger of the UK Active Value Fund, which leads a concert party that controls 24.1 per cent of Signet's voting rights, said the two UK jewellery chains should very easily command a price of £300 million when they are sold in the next few weeks.

Mr Treger said this should allow Signet to repay preference shareholders the £510 million he says they are owed.

"There seems to be enough for everyone to go round," he said.

Signet, headed by James McAdam, is considering offers for H Samuel and Ernest Jones, from bidders including rival jewellers Goldsmiths and Argos. Mr McAdam said Signet was under no pressure to sell and would only do so if it could realise the "strategic worth" of the 600 stores.

The group made annual pre-tax profits of £25 million, a 74 per cent improvement. Operating profits rose 30 per cent to £63.9 million, but Signet was burdened by £38.9 million of interest payments on its debt, which it has trimmed

back to £308.2 million. Signet has refurbished nearly all of the 167 Ernest Jones shops, and these are showing a 24 per cent improvement in like-for-like sales in the first ten weeks of this year.

The total United Kingdom market is showing a 7 per cent increase, while the 433-store H Samuel is only 1 per cent ahead. Signet will shortly start introducing a new shop design to H Samuel.

In the United States, Sterling increased its profits by 39 per cent to £45.9 million, with margins climbing back above 8 per cent.

Signet is anxious to simplify its complex capital structure

which includes nine classes of shares. It owes £135 million on its preference shares and is unable to pay dividends.

Walker Boyd, finance director, said the £90 million of ordinary shares represent only a quarter of the full market value of the company.

Improved United Kingdom profits of £18.1 million (£11.4 million) showed the benefit of the sale of the loss-making Salisbury travel goods chain.

Signet said that the underlying profits of the United Kingdom jewellery business also rose, by 15 per cent to £22.2 million, in spite of a 1.5 per cent fall in sales. Its margins rose to 8 per cent.

IBM suffers \$500m drop in earnings

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

IBM, the world's biggest computer manufacturer, suffered a \$500 million drop in net earnings in the first-quarter of this year because of sluggish markets and delays in switching to its new mainframe computers.

Although revenues climbed from \$15.7 billion to \$16.5 billion, net earnings fell to \$774 million. "We turned in a good but uneven performance," said Lou Gerstner, the chairman and chief executive. He said that revenues grew in all geographic areas and shipments of Lotus Notes, which IBM purchased for more than \$3 billion last year, had more than tripled. "At the same time, though, our overall hard-

ware revenues and margins were disappointing," he said. This was mainly because of the transition to the company's new mini-mainframe computers, the System/390 and AS/400. Weak demand for personal computers in the US and continuing downward pressure on prices for many products eroded the company's profit margins.

The results did not damage the perception that IBM was successfully recreating itself after several disastrous years of falling profits and market share. Many computer companies have been hurt over the past few months by declining sales and tighter margins.

Lloyds TSB waits on New Zealand bid

By ROBERT MILLER

LLOYDS TSB Group is expected to learn today whether its bid to buy Trust Bank of New Zealand has been successful after a last minute counter-bid by Westpac of Australia.

Trust Bank has been studying the merits of the Westpac bid, understood to be a cash deal, against that of the long-standing offer from National Bank of New Zealand, a Lloyds subsidiary. It is believed that the latter's bid is similar to that of the Lloyds acquisition of TSB which was, in effect, a reverse takeover paid for with shares instead of cash. Some analysts believe that a third party, ASB Bank,

which is 75 per cent owned by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, might also be still in with an outside chance.

Since the formal bidding for Trust Bank started some weeks ago the price tag has risen to about NZ\$1.5 billion or £676 million.

The final decision on the preferred bidder rests with the nine community trusts that control nearly 80 per cent of Trust Bank.

Lloyds TSB said last night: "We never comment on market rumour." If the UK group is successful in its bid for Trust Bank it will become New Zealand's largest bank with assets of nearly NZ\$24 billion.

Robinson clouds Woolwich AGM

By ANNE ASHWORTH AND ROBERT MILLER

THE Peter Robinson affair is likely to dominate the agenda at today's annual meeting of the Woolwich Building Society. However, lawyers acting for the man at the centre of the controversy said the former chief executive would not attend.

The issues to be raised include the external report now being prepared by KPMG, the accountant, and Linklaters & Paines, the solicitor, on the circumstances of Mr Robinson's departure last month. The society will not yet disclose contents

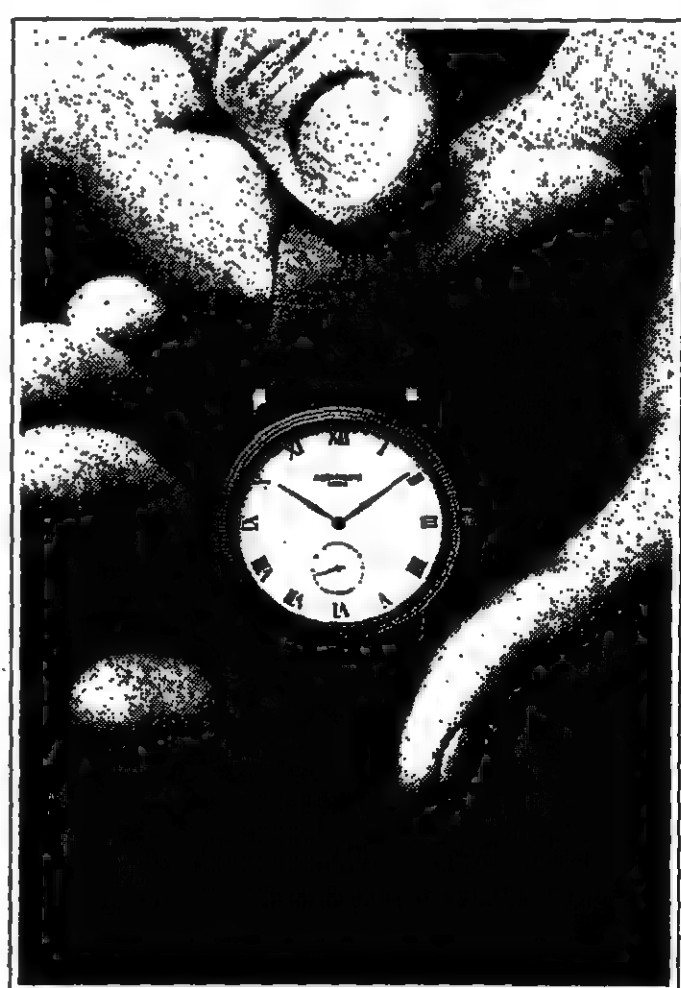
of the report to members, claiming it contains confidential information, which is likely to irritate the assembled members.

Henry Clinton-Davis, of D J Freeman, the law firm representing Mr Robinson, said only a limited amount of information concerning the allegations against his client had been handed over so far. Until the full report has been received and studied, Mr Clinton-Davis said no further comment would be made. Mr Robinson and his legal team are understood to have taken counsel's advice on compensation for loss of his £320,000 post.

The continuing uncertainty over Mr

Robinson's successor has made the Woolwich a prime takeover target. Among those with a clear interest in acquiring the £3 billion society could be the Prudential, the Royal Bank of Scotland and the Halifax. However, Abbey National has said it will not bid. A European or Australian institution might also want to get involved. The Woolwich says no customer has, so far written or called to criticise the move to oust Mr Robinson. Head hunters compiling a shortlist to replace him are looking not only at building society executives but also those experienced in running FT-SE 100 companies.

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a particular Patek Philippe movement requires four years of continuous work to bring to absolute perfection, we will take four years. The result will be a watch that is unlike any other. A watch that conveys quality from first glance and first touch. A watch with a distinction: generation after generation it has been worn, loved and collected by those who are very difficult to please; those who will only accept the best. For the day that you take delivery of your Patek Philippe, you will have acquired the best. Your watch will be a masterpiece, quietly reflecting your own values. A watch that was made to be treasured.

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THE FIVE

THE TIMES

CITY DIARY

A matter of priorities

HEARST has announced that it will be publishing a new weekly magazine, *Weekend*, in the autumn. The magazine will be published on Saturdays and will contain a mix of news, features, and entertainment. It is expected to be a significant addition to the Sunday newspaper market.

Big spender

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Broth troubles

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Back to school

IT is back to the schools. The first of the new school year is under way. The first of the new school year is under way. The first of the new school year is under way.

Still temping

EMBARRASSMENT for Lord Street the first anniversary party, which celebrated its 50th anniversary. The party was held at the Ritz Hotel and was a great success. The party was held at the Ritz Hotel and was a great success.

MORAG PRESTON

THE TIMES

CITY DIARY

A matter of priorities

HEARTLESS Michael Hardern, the chief building society carpetbagger, is forgoing his father's wedding in Penzance today to attend the Woolwich Building Society's annual meeting. Instead of canapes with the congregation, the butler, who has served the Prince and Princess of Wales, will be running around the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre collecting members for conversion. Hardern says he's arranged to meet the newlyweds on their honeymoon in Bath on Friday, which fits in nicely with the Bristol & West's AGM that afternoon, adding "I've opened them an account with Birmingham Midshires - the next building society to be taken over."

Big spender

SUGARED words from accountant KPMG that leave a sickly taste in the mouth. When Melis, best known as the maker of New Berry Fruits, went into receivership, recovery expert Stephen James spotted: "Melis is clearly a famous and evocative name - I know I gave my mother boxes of New Berry Fruits on special occasions in the past."

Brolly trolley

SWAINE, Adeney, Brigg, umbrella maker to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, is adopting downmarket ideas. The Mayfair firm that supplies the Queen's riding whip, paid £4,100 for a personalised car number plate this week. Chairman John de Bruyne wanted "WHIP 1", but is happy to put "BROLLY" on the company's small-shaped van that boasts its three Royal warrants. "Terribly naïf, but it's marketing," he squawks.



JIM McADAM, chairman of Signet the Jeweller, was none too happy to hear about the shenanigans on BBC's Business Breakfast yesterday morning. As Signet's results came up on TV screens, brunette presenter Sara Coburn launched into a lengthy spiel about Rainers, then broke into giggles.

Back to school

IT IS back to the blackboard at Texaco, which signed a pioneering deal with City University Business School yesterday to provide extra staff tuition. Middle and senior management can do a one-day course to a postgraduate diploma in Management or a Flexible Masters degree.

Still tempting

EMBARRASSMENT for Brook Street, the UK's first temporary employment agency, which celebrated its 50th anniversary yesterday. Party preparations were going to plan, after a team had spent weeks tracking down Brook Street temps from the Fifties, Sixties, Seventies, Eighties and Nineties. Mock desks were set up at Claridge's Hotel for local radio and TV crews to interview the girls who helped to make history. But where was the shoulder-padded girl of the Eighties? - at a job elsewhere, double-booked by Brook Street.

MORAG PRESTON

How Labour might try to transform the economy

It will be tempted to pursue policies designed to change the way business works, says Anatole Kaletsky

The days are long gone when socialists believed that capitalism exists to expropriate the justly earned fruits of labour. But today's Labour Party has found new reasons to distrust British capitalism that have nothing to do with Karl Marx. It is an article of faith among Labour leaders that the poor performance of the British economy in the postwar era can be blamed largely on the culture of British business.

British businessmen and financiers are left to have failed the nation - by not investing, by failing to train their workers, by avoiding taxes, by fining their pockets with share options, by refusing to co-operate with government, and by concentrating on stock market prices instead of taking a long-term view. These defects, no longer attributed to capitalism in general, are now blamed on capitalism's speciality by British firms.

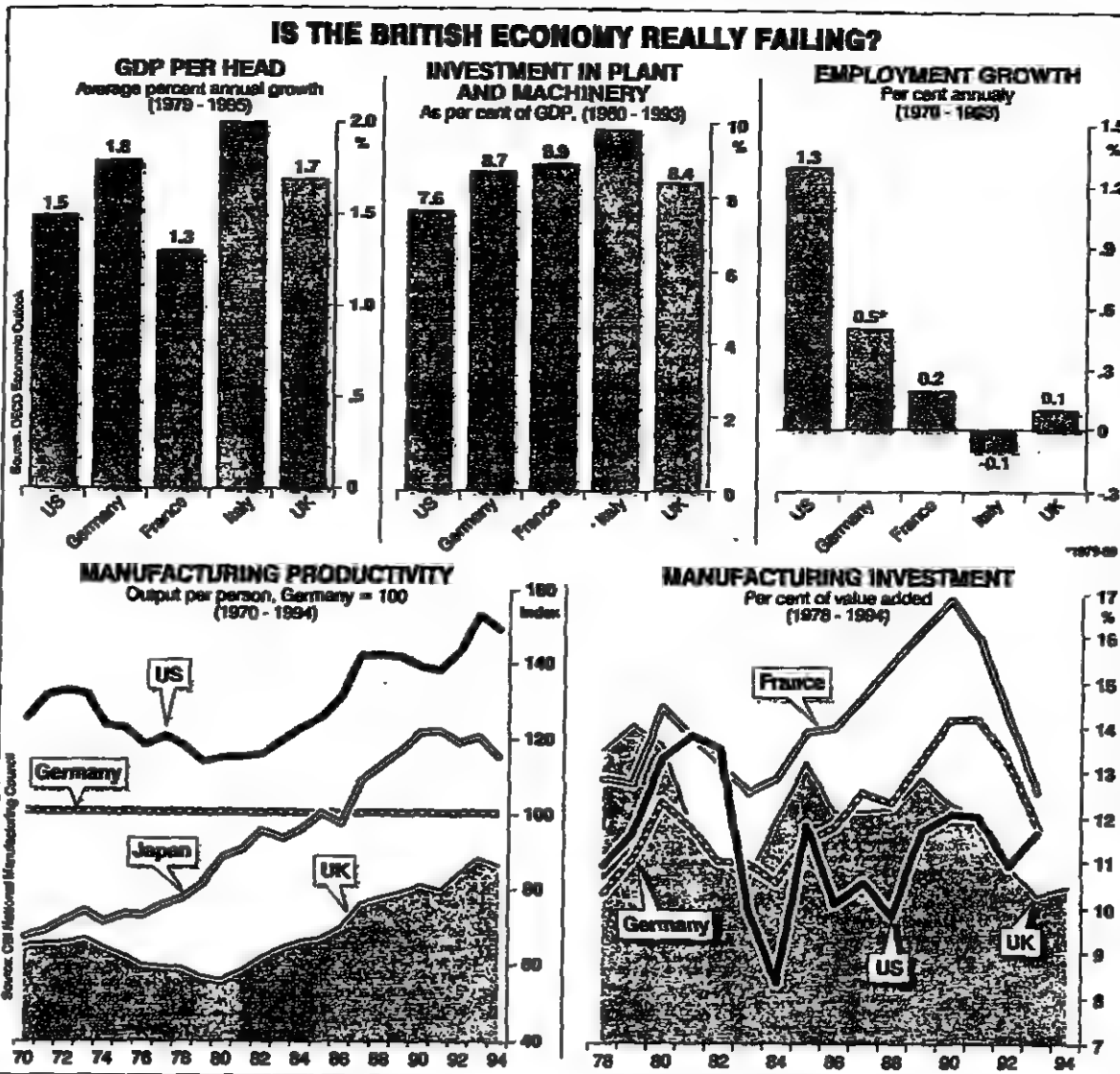
The righteous indignation about a business community that has helped itself but betrayed Britain is fully expounded in Will Hutton's best-selling book, *The State We're In*. No Labour leader would publicly (or even privately) go nearly as far as Mr Hutton. But the sense of frustration, tinged with anger, about the short-sighted attitudes of British business, breaks out regularly even in the speeches of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

The British economy could clearly have done much better than it did in the 1980s. But there is little evidence that our underperformance was due to low investment, short-termism or the other items on Labour's charge-sheet (the charts illustrate a few of the relevant facts).

How, then, could Britain's performance have been improved? I believe that the main answer lies in better demand management and exchange-rate policy; if the last recession had been avoided, Britain would have shot from near the bottom to the top of the European job-creation league. Labour, however, accepts the present day conventional wisdom: the key to faster growth is in "structural" policies on investment, competition, infrastructure, tax and financial structures, corporate governance, "long-termism" and labour market reform.

To transform the British economy's performance it will therefore be tempted to pursue a host of policies designed to change the way British business and financial markets work. One article can hardly begin to discuss the many measures that Labour spokesmen have put forward (a remarkably comprehensive summary can be found in a 70-page booklet called *Doing Business With Blair* by Burson-Marsteller Government Affairs).

Instead, I will look at the four questions chosen by Adam Turner, Director-General of the CBI, in his major speech on Labour two months ago to focus businessmen's concerns. What business needed to know above all else, he said, was exactly where Labour stood on four broad issues: inflation, taxes, employment laws and corporate governance. Here, then, is what can be said about Labour's plans. On inflation, the apparent lack of clarity is not really much of a problem. Mr Brown has not announced a formal inflation target, but, in practice, he will stick to something very similar to the present 2.5 per cent as I suggested in



my article on Monday on Labour's macroeconomic policy. The real uncertainty is what the Chancellor will do if unexpected pressures push the economy off the targeted course. This question applies in principle to every government - and the lack of pragmatism the Treasury has shown in following various arbitrary targets over the past 17 years does not augur well, whether Labour or Tories are in charge.

Surprisingly, however, Labour may have an easier time than expected in keeping inflation down. It would have an option that did not exist for past Labour governments and which for the Tories is effectively foreclosed. This would be to join the European single currency. I have no idea whether Labor will actually join EMU - and neither, I believe, does Mr Blair. But the very fact that this option exists on the horizon should help Labour to avoid the kind of currency crises that have so often undone Labour governments in the past. Indeed, the greater danger for Labour may well be a pound that is too strong, rather than too weak. Now what about taxes? As I explained on Monday the top rate of tax will almost certainly be 50 per cent. However, the critical question of where the new tax will bite remains unsettled - and until this is announced, Labour can have little hope of winning the business community's trust, still less its active support. The other predictable tax measure is the windfall tax on the water and electricity industries, accompanied by a drastic tightening of the regulatory regime. Again, however, it is the level of the new tax that is all important and nobody seems to have any idea about this, including Mr Brown.

Other tax reforms are even more uncertain. The good news for investors is that Mr Brown is "attracted" to reforming capital gains tax. Assets held for longer than, say, five years could be taxed at only 20 per cent. If Mr Brown announced this change before the election he would go a long way to appeasing businessmen by the new 50 per cent rate. Indeed, my impression is that many would happily accept slightly higher income tax in exchange for some relief from the hated CGT. The bad news is that Labour is likely to tighten the inheritance tax regime.

Potentially, the most important reform for companies, and certainly for their accountants, will be a study on whether the corporation-tax system is biased in favour of dividends and against investment from retained earnings. Even more controversial could be Mr Brown's plan to combat tax avoidance by taking powers to "look behind the legal form of tax arrangements" and apply the spirit, rather than the letter, of the revenue laws. Both tax and constitutional lawyers can look forward to that. Turning to labour markets, the outlines of policy are again quite clear, but the crucial details are missing. Labour will implement a national minimum wage, in spite of the opposition of most economists, as well as employers. But whether the NMW means anything or nothing will depend entirely on the level at which it is set. At the Spanish level of £1.80 an hour it would be an irrelevance; at the Belgian level of £5.70, it would be a catastrophe, and the outcome could be anything in between.

The same could be true of Labour's allegiance to the social chapter. Mr Blair has said that he has "no intention

of agreeing to everything that emerges from the EU". But he knows perfectly well that parts of the social chapter are subject to majority voting - and that other EU countries are pressing to extend majority voting to issues such as social security charges and worker representation. Would a Labour government block any such extension? Mr Blair has remained resolutely silent.

These issues arouse deep passions, but how much do they matter in the great scheme of things? To judge by the relative records of job creation in Britain and Europe, there is no convincing evidence that a small dollop of German-style regulation would have much effect one way or the other.

What, finally, about the broader idea of creating a "stakeholder economy" on the German model? Although certain changes in corporate governance are likely - particularly a tightening in the takeover laws - Mr Blair has become much cooler about the "stakeholder" concept since he delivered his famous speech in Singapore. Perhaps he has been swayed by industry arguments that it is up to elected politicians, not company directors, to establish the social constraints on profit-maximising behaviour. Perhaps he has noticed that in Germany stakeholder behaviour seems to be going out of style. Or perhaps he has simply realised that Britain and Germany are different countries, with different political traditions, different business cultures and different skills.

British businesses may be less long-termist, but perhaps they are more opportunistic. British workers may be less disciplined, but more flexible. British managers may be less thorough, but more innovative.

In a world of free trade and global competition, countries can thrive by being different and specialising in what they do well. These are the arguments that business must urgently get across to Mr Blair.

Tomorrow: Europe, politics and the "quality of life"

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British businesses may be less long-termist, but perhaps they are more opportunistic. British workers may be less disciplined, but more flexible. British managers may be less thorough, but more innovative.

In a world of free trade and global competition, countries can thrive by being different and specialising in what they do well. These are the arguments that business must urgently get across to Mr Blair.

Tomorrow: Europe, politics and the "quality of life"

The balance of power lies in the hands of Lang

Christine Buckley on the ramifications of yesterday's declaration by Southern

It is now clear, looking back on the tidal wave of bids that swept through the electricity industry last year, that the show had only just begun. After yesterday's declaration from Southern, the US utility, the industry is now staring at the prospect of consolidation on a massive scale. The move of Britain's largest generator into American hands, with potentially the amalgamation of Southern Electric, the UK regional company, would create a completely new ball game in the privatised electricity industry. And it would be one which the electricity regulator would find impossible to referee properly.

The prospect must weigh heavy on the mind of Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, as he prepares his decision on bids by the two main UK generators for regional electricity companies (Recs) and thus the acceptability of vertical integration in the industry. If he ratifies vertical integration, Southern will make its move on National Power either with the

companies adopting the principles of super utilities with various strategic tie-ups.

The second pattern is the more worrying one for regulation of the industry. Vertical integration - the merger of generating and distribution companies - began with ScottishPower's takeover of Manweb, the Rec based in the North-West. If Monopolies and Mergers Commission (MMC) report leaks prove correct, it is about to continue, with National Power and PowerGen, the country's largest generators, being allowed to bid for Southern Electric and Midlands Electricity. The MMC is believed to have recommended the bids, with a range of provisions. The decision rests with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

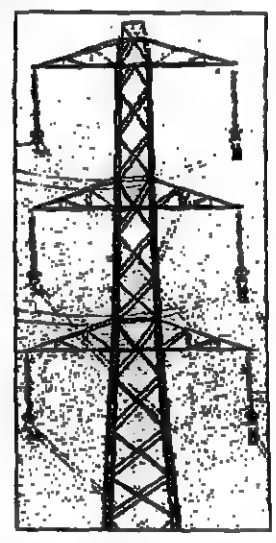
Of all the bids for the 12 Recs, and just three have not received approaches, the moves by the generators have caused the most consternation. It is arguable that ScottishPower, one of Scotland's two integrated companies which operate as a duopoly in

their market divorced from the rest of the UK, created a precedent of vertical integration with its takeover of Manweb. But when PowerGen made its approach for Midlands and National Power moved on Southern, the fears of a reduction in competition and in the transparency of operations voiced by Stephen

Littlechild, the electricity regulator, were echoed by regional companies.

Professor Littlechild called for a referral to the MMC of the ScottishPower bid, but his concerns were ignored. Further down the line, and with the greater influence on the market of the English generators, they were heeded. Critics complained that with competition in household electricity supply only two years away, the generators, already able to command huge sway over the electricity pool price, would jump out of bounds if they had their own Recs to which to supply power and through which to reach the domestic market. "The concerns triggered by the UK generators' bids can only be augmented by an overseas company bidding for a generator. The fact that for a company owns a Rec with a strong gas division and is also believed to be interested in water presents a regulator's nightmare."

The Government still holds a golden share to restrict holdings in UK generators. Southern clearly does not believe that it is wedded to it and the DTI has said it would consider whether to exercise its power on individual merits. Mr Lang may well move on to that difficult decision after the one he is about to make in the next few days.



Speculative activity disrupting building societies' business operations

From the Chairman, The Building Societies Association Sir, The "flood of speculative money" coming in to building societies to which you refer (Mammon's stakeholders massacre the mutants, April 15) shows no sign of ebbing. It has breached the gates of almost all societies - regardless of their size and notwithstanding the often repeated commitment to independence and mutual status by many of them.

This speculative activity has seriously disrupted the normal business operations of building societies and the services they provide to bona fide investors and borrowers. It has overstretched counter sources at many branch offices - resulting in long queues and even in some instances closed doors - and overloaded processing systems. The bizarre consequences of this activity is that the industry now has a significant proportion of "members" whose sole intention is to vote their societies out of existence, given the chance.

To stem the flood, some societies have set minimum investments for new savings accounts; others are now

opening only deposit accounts. Understandable though these measures are, they reduce building society membership to the privilege of a select caste - of those able to afford it or fortunate enough to have got on to the members' register in time. This is completely at odds with the intentions of the 1986 Act and with societies' historic commitment to all savers and homeowners, whatever their means.

Building societies, like banks, are commercial organisations. With its capital advantage and low cost base, the industry can, however, continue

throughout our report. In our view, it is unfair to shift the risk of a defendant's insolvency from the other defendant(s) to the blameless plaintiff. And it is misleading to say, as is sometimes said, that "defendants can be called on to provide 100 per cent of damages even though they are only 1 per cent at fault": as a matter of causation and blameworthiness relative to the plaintiff, joint and several liability follows from each defendant being 100 per cent responsible for the whole of the plaintiff's loss.

Nor is Robert Bruce accurate to imply that we advocated nothing to ease the liability problems faced by accountants. For example, we pro-

posed a reform of section 310 of the Companies Act 1985 which, allied with a clarification of the operation of the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977, would enable auditors reasonably to limit their liability by means of the contractual term for a non-contractual disclaimer.

While we welcome constructive criticism of our arguments, Robert Bruce's comments do not, in my view, help the cause of fair and sensible law reform.

Yours sincerely, ANDREW BURROWS, Law Commission, Conquest House, 37/38 John Street, Theobalds Road, WC1.

Not quite crystal clear at NatWest

From D. M. Penton Sir, I have just received the NatWest Group's annual report, which proudly boasts that "We are very pleased that the sections marked (symbol of a crystal) on the list of contents have earned the Crystal Mark from the Plain English Campaign. This means that the wording has reached a standard of clarity that is appropriate for the intended audience."

Of the 30 items on the list of contents, the mark does not appear against the following: financial highlights, results of principal businesses, auditors' statement summary consolidated profit and loss account, summary consolidated balance sheet and notes to the summary financial statement.

Surely these are precisely the items on which the shareholder would wish to have an appropriate standard of clarity. Or is this just a subtle way of telling us to read these sections with caution?

Yours faithfully, D. M. PENTON, 2 Ullswater Road, Barnes, SW13.

Letters to the Business and Finance section of The Times can be sent by fax on 0171-752 5112.

NATIONAL & PROVINCIAL BUILDING SOCIETY PROPOSED TRANSFER OF BUSINESS TO ABBEY NATIONAL PLC RESULT OF MEMBERS' VOTE

National and Provincial Building Society hereby gives Notice to all members of the Society that the result of the vote on the Saving Members' Special Resolution and on the Borrowing Members' Resolution moved at the Special General Meeting of the members of the Society held at NYNEX arena Manchester on 11 April 1996 is as follows:

Saving Members' Special Resolution
Votes in favour 843,226
Votes against 33,394
Total votes cast 876,620
Members qualified to vote 1,056,061

The votes cast in favour of the resolution represent 96.2% of the total votes cast compared with the 79% majority required, and 79.8% of the members qualified to vote, compared with the 50% required. The resolution has accordingly been passed.

Borrowing Members' Resolution
Votes in favour 233,201
Votes against 10,468
Total votes cast 243,669

The votes cast in favour of the resolution represent 95.7% of the total votes cast compared with the simple majority required. The resolution has accordingly been passed.

Issued by Authority of the Directors
R. Keith Mather
Secretary

18 April 1996

National & Provincial Building Society

N&P

National & Provincial Building Society

Oil industry faces £64m payout and clean-up bill over Sea Empress

By MARIANNE CURPHIE

THE environmental and economic cost of the Sea Empress disaster at Milford Haven two months ago could be as high as £64 million, according to the oil industry.

Clean-up expenses have been estimated at between £11 million and £16 million, while the compensation paid to fishermen and the tourist industry has been set at between £34 million and £48 million by the

International Oil Pollution Compensation Fund.

However, Skuld, the ship's Norwegian insurers, said its early guess at the cost of the spill was about £40 million. Under maritime insurance regulations, Skuld pays for the first £8 million compensation and the IOPC picks up the rest £49 million.

The IOPC said yesterday it had decided to pay 75 per cent of its \$49 million fund to local people with proven claims.

The remaining £12.2 million will be held back in case claims are greater than originally calculated.

The IOPC wants to avoid similar problems to those experienced after the Braer tanker disaster in Shetland in 1993. There was a flurry of claims just before the end of the three-year submission deadline, and Skuld, which also insured the Braer, gave a warning that there might not be enough money to satisfy all

claims. Skuld has an £8 million compensation fund available for victims of the Sea Empress disaster, after which the IOPC will meet proven claims.

Mans Jacobsson, managing director of the IOPC, urged fishermen to submit claims as early as possible.

"We can make running payments of up to 75 per cent of the funds available to fishermen who have been banned from fishing in the

waters around Milford Haven," he said. "Many will be unable to make a final claim because they do not know how long the ban will stay in place, but their situation will be regularly reviewed."

The IOPC, which meets again in June, says it will not know until July and August whether the oil spill has had a serious effect on the region's tourism industry.

"We have only anecdotal evidence for the tourist trade

at Easter," Mr Jacobsson said. "Some reports have said most people came only on day-trips, while others in the industry say trade was better than they had expected."

Mr Thorp said payments to claimants would be assessed "on an individual basis". He added: "We will pay out up to 75 per cent of our funds, but if a claimant can demonstrate that they require more than that, we will look at the possibility of increasing the payment."

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Receivers to Meltis make 190 redundant

RECEIVERS to Meltis, the ailing confectionery company, have announced 190 redundancies, leaving just 20 staff still employed at the Bedford factory. The latest job losses are in addition to the 100 redundancies announced before the appointment of receivers on Tuesday.

Stephen James, of KPMG, the administrative receiver, said: "I am optimistic that the brand name of Meltis will survive. I have already had several inquiries from interested parties. However, the company itself is unlikely to survive." The redundancies were announced after an evening of meetings with management to establish the firm's financial position. About 100 employees were already in redundancy notice prior to the appointment of receivers. Meltis, whose sales were £15 million in its last financial year, is owned by Pengkalan (UK), a South-East Asian conglomerate. The company makes the New Berry Fruits selection, ginger, orange and lemon slices, and Turkish delight.

France buys bank stake

THE French state is to take over a total holding of 21.95 per cent, owned by the Thomson electronics group, in the troubled Crédit Lyonnais bank, it was announced yesterday. The price will be about Fr3.34 billion. The transfer is expected to take place when Thomson is privatised and is likely to be completed by the end of this year. Thomson plans to make a total provision of Fr2.08 billion against a fall in the value of Crédit Lyonnais shares and investment certificates. The near collapse and recapitalisation of Crédit Lyonnais have hurt the results of Thomson in the past two years.

Sharpe & Fisher deals

SHARPE & FISHER, the building supplies company based in Cheltenham, is acquiring Goodlands, a building merchant with branches in Wiltshire, Somerset and Devon, for £2.87 million in cash and shares. Goodlands earned operating profits of £213,000 on sales of £11.9 million last year. Net assets were £78,000 at December 31, 1995. The acquisition lifts the total number of Sharpe & Fisher branches to 32. William Oley, the chairman of Goodlands and a former finance director of UBM, the builder's merchant, will join the board of Sharpe & Fisher.

Kwik-Fit expands

KWIK-FIT has added another 45 outlets by buying three tyre and exhaust companies for £12.3 million. Autospeed Tyre & Exhaust Centres, Bristol, Ebley Tyre Services, Gloucester, and the assets and business of Manor Tyre Group, Bristol, have combined annual turnover of £20 million and earned profits of £1.2 million before tax and directors' salaries in the last financial year. The consideration was met by £7.1 million cash and £5.2 million in unsecured loan notes. The purchases lift the number of Kwik-Fit outlets to 836.

Dowty wins US order

DOWTY AEROSPACE, a division of TI Group, the specialised engineering company, has won a \$10 million contract from Mesa Airlines, the US regional carrier, to supply propeller systems for 50 Saab 340 aircraft. The order covers 30 new 340B propellers and 20 used 340As. Mesa has an option on a further 22 aircraft. With more than 250 Saab 340 aircraft in service with Dowty propellers, the value of Dowty's contribution to the 340 programme to date is more than \$70 million.

Air France incurs loss of £156m

FROM AFP IN PARIS

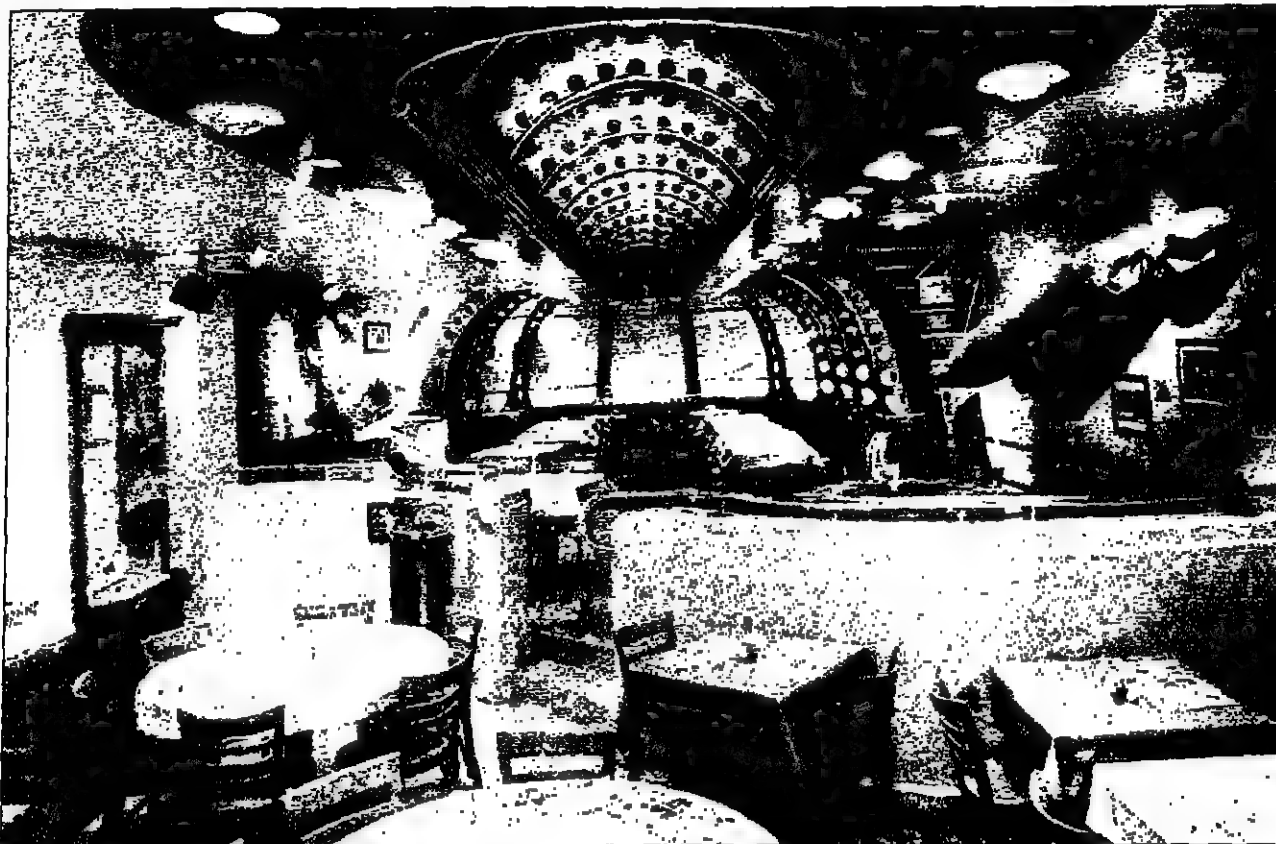
AIR FRANCE, the state-owned airline, incurred a loss before provisions of £1.2 billion (£150 million) in the financial year to the end of March, it emerged yesterday. Provisions are likely to total Fr300 million. The airline, which is being rescued by the State from near-bankruptcy, did not reveal net results, but said that it expected to cut the net loss in 1996-97 to Fr115 million.

Under a three-year recovery plan, the airline had set a target of reducing the net loss for last year to Fr1.2 billion. In 1994-95 it incurred a net loss of Fr3.7 billion. In the third year of recovery, in 1996-97, it planned to almost break even.

The provisional figures for last year were published in an internal newsletter but were not released to the press. Provisions will cover redundancy payments for cabin crew.

Gross operating profit last year exceeded 1994's Fr2.7 billion by about Fr1 billion. The company had set a target of Fr4 billion and the shortfall reflected the effects of strikes in France, which had cost the company Fr391 million.

In the current year, the company expected to incur a net loss of Fr115 million, which would be slightly short of its target, on total sales of Fr4.1 billion and a gross operating profit of Fr5 billion.



Hyperspace: the price of Planet Hollywood is expected to rocket when the shares are offered tomorrow

Planet Hollywood into orbit

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

PLANET HOLLYWOOD, the restaurant chain that boasts leading film stars among its investors, has responded to feverish investor demand by sharply lifting the price range for this week's share offering.

They will be priced today at

about \$18 each, \$4 more than expected. The rise values the 22-restaurant chain, which includes one in London, at \$1.9 billion, 95 times earnings based on its 1995 profits of \$20.7 million. Last year was the first in which the company has been in the black since it was founded in 1992.

The rating reflects the near-hysteria surrounding the is-

sue of 11.6 per cent of the shares. However, the excitement has fed on itself, with many buyers simply hoping to make a quick killing on the expected price rise when the shares start trading tomorrow before selling out.

The issue will value the stakes held by the co-founders at about \$300 million each. One of the founders is Robert

Earl, the British entrepreneur who founded the Hard Rock Café but was forced out in 1992. Hollywood stars, such as Arnold Schwarzenegger, Sylvester Stallone, Bruce Willis and Demi Moore, who have lent their names to the restaurant, stand to gain up to \$20 million each.

Tempus, page 28

ACCOUNTANCY

Fill the gap in accounts

Robert Langford on the continuing need to cut red tape and reduce the burden on smaller companies

Accounting standards are wasting people's time and energy. Who says so? Accountants.

"We continue to make unnecessary calls on the time of owners of small businesses," Brian Shearer, a member of the financial reporting committee of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, says. "We are also wasting the time of those skilled people who assist in preparing accounts, people who could much better be employed helping their clients to become more efficient."

Mr Shearer, a partner in Grant Thornton, the accountancy firm, has helped to pen an official response to proposals for a big change in the accounting demands on small companies. If the institute has its way, the majority will soon find themselves subject to a kinder, less demanding financial reporting regime. The more complex big business has become, so the tighter and more demanding accounting standards have been drawn.

"Quite rightly, the Accounting Standards Board has focused on those aspects of financial reporting to which the public pays most attention. It's quite right that it should safeguard public confidence in the financial reporting system in this way," Mr Shearer says.

The problem is that often the

issues tackled are not those likely to impinge too much on the everyday existence of the average family company, or to interest the users of its annual accounts. Hence the "big GAAP" (generally accepted accounting principles) little GAAP" debate - whether standards should, as is generally the case now, apply equally across the board, no matter what the size of company.

In reality, the argument has long since been settled. Both accounting standards and Companies Act reporting and auditing rules allow some disclosure concessions based principally on size.

Last year the Government signalled its intention to take the process further when it published a discussion paper, *Accounting Simplifications*. This contained 50 possible detailed small and medium-sized company reporting simplifications. It also proposed a jump in the turnover threshold of a small company from £2.8 million to £4.2 million.

Even before this, a working party advising the ASB on criteria for exempting small companies from its standards had published tentative conclusions. These were that of 34 standards and abstracts in force, only six should apply to companies falling within the Companies Act definition of small. Reaction was 60:0 in



Robert Langford wants smaller company account changes

favour. Although the institute said there was a need for change, it did not agree with the bludgeoning impact of dispensing with more than 30 per cent of small company reporting requirements.

Last December a revised paper from the advisory group, *Designed to Fit - A Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities*, conceded that "the piecemeal application of particular stan-

dards. Instead of saying, arbitrarily, that some standards would apply totally and the others not at all, the working party has told the committee that its new proposals provide a "satisfactory and workable solution" to the small companies reporting dilemma. "Our focus is on trying to improve the level of communication by cutting out a lot that is irritating to both preparers and users because it serves nobody," he says.

Even though the new small company rules will not change the way profits are calculated - an important point, says Mr Shearer - a FRSSSE will serve another purpose. It will remind all involved that there is already a qualitative difference between small, medium-sized, large and listed company accounts. Different disclosure rules already apply to each.

"That is something that is useful to flag," Mr Shearer says. The institute is now keen for the ASB to act on the recommendations by publishing a FRSSSE.

At first sight, this might not appear to fit in with the standard-setter's big company priorities. But once smaller companies have been taken out of the equation, the move would free it to harden up still further on the reporting demands it makes on larger concerns.

The author is head of financial reporting at the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales

Spoiling the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar

OUR finest food scientists find their direction of work changed by it. The Chancellor of the Exchequer blames it for the overshoot in the PSBR. And pigeon-fanciers turn apologetic at its mention. For a tax which seems so innocuous, value-added tax (VAT) has a lot to answer for.

The food angle should come as no surprise. VAT experts have argued lengthily over the years about such vital issues as whether a Jaffa cake is a biscuit or a cake, or whether hazelnuts are snacks or nuts. All this nonsense has a great effect. The key to whether something is a snack or a food and thus zero-rated can simply be whether or not it swells in its manufacture. On that basis, the humble crisp attracts VAT and a corn chip does not. This is important. Two similar products stand side-by-side on the supermarket shelves. To the public they are very similar. To the retailer there is a 17.5 per cent differential built into the margin. It is no wonder that the work of food scientists is geared not towards finding a more nutritious snack but towards finding one that can be made without attracting VAT.

But the importance of VAT is enormous. Hence the Chancellor's irritation over a shortfall in tax receipts, mostly from VAT, which means that the PSBR is larger than he would like, and certainly larger than that which might guarantee a margin for further tax cuts in a pre-election period.

But he has only himself and previous Conservative Chancellors to blame. In 1972, Anthony Barber, then Chancellor, announced, in one of those soundbites which reverberate down the years, that "Britain will have the simplest VAT in all of Europe". He then took a decision that ensured that this could not happen. He gave the responsibility for the tax's administration to Customs and Excise rather than to the Inland Revenue.

There were good reasons for the decision. VAT was seen as the successor to the old purchase tax and that had come under the aegis of Customs. Also the Inland Revenue was in a state of tattered nerves, to put it mildly. In 1965, under the Labour Government of Harold Wilson, it had introduced two new taxes. These were capital gains tax and corporation tax and involved an enormous amount of work. At the same time, marginal tax rates were running in some cases at 98 per cent of income. By the time Barber wanted to introduce VAT in 1972, the Inland Revenue was exhausted and the last thing it wanted was to take on the introduction of a new tax that was likely to change taxation systems profoundly. Customs and

Excise got the job. And it is that decision that now rebounds on the Chancellor. If VAT had been integrated into the tax mainstream from the very start, the way in which it has grown would have been very different. And it would also be policed by a tax authority which was used to the intricate business of dealing with complex tax laws and tax practitioners.

The Chancellor has also dug the hole in which he finds himself somewhat deeper by his own efforts. If my grandmothers was still around, she should be laying down the law about spoiling the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar. In a succession of finance initiatives, the collection and administration of VAT have been starved of expertise at both ends of the spectrum.

At the small business end there used to be a system that provided greater help to those entering the VAT net for the first time. Small companies used to be guaranteed a visit from a VAT inspector during the first six months of their entering the VAT net. They might not have enjoyed the experience, but it did set them on the straight and narrow very early on in the VAT regime. But now budgets for VAT inspectors have been pared to the bone. Now a new business will have a visit within the first three years of operation, if it is lucky, within the first six years, if it is not.

If the way that a business is accounting for VAT is incorrect then, over six years, an enormous amount of administrative chaos can build up. To say nothing of the possibility of underpayments.

And, at the other end of the spectrum, the Chancellor's own actions have worsened the Treasury argument is that large VAT repayments are taking their toll on the nation's tax receipts and that much of this is down to extremely sharp VAT experts in the accountancy firms advising on highly effective tax planning strategies for clients. Many of these experts are gamekeepers turned poachers. They came from Customs and Excise in the first place. And they moved into the private sector because they could earn more there.

The answer would be to hire some back. Or take bright accountants in on something like a five-year contract. Then, expert could battle with expert on something approaching equal terms. But the Treasury now, like so much of UK business, has a cost-cutting culture. Cash to match private-sector salaries does not exist. If the Chancellor wants to bring in more cash from the weird and wonderful world of VAT, then he should hark back to one of the basics of business: no investment, no returns.



ROBERT BRUCE

Votes for all at the ICA?

THE English ICA has always thought itself a bit of a cut above the Association of Certified Accountants. For one thing, it doesn't have any of these desperately embarrassing campaigns to extend democracy throughout the membership that Professor Prem Sikka, the thorn in the certified's side, is forever mounting. But now, Moorgate Place, will have to eat humble pie. The eccentric accountancy tutor, Jeff Wooler, has gar-

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

nered the ten signatures required to put a motion down at the institute's next annual meeting. On June 4, the institute will have to vote on whether to extend the constituency which elects each new president from that of the council to the whole membership. The shame of it.

Marathon meal

WHO said the rivalry between the English ICA and the Char-

tered Institute of Taxation was over and done with? Bob Dommett, secretary-general of the latter, runs in the London Marathon this weekend. And this week should have been one of careful training and diet to bring the man to the starting line in the peak of fitness. So what did the English ICA do? It held its annual dinner on Monday, to which it invited fellow institute dignitaries. Dommett manfully ploughed his way through

ported fresh salmon with dill and sour cream, grilled breast of corned chicken and vegetables provençale, devils on horseback and mango bava-rois. Expect a slow time on Sunday.

Taxing Maas

THE Inland Revenue sees turbulent times ahead. There is a new chairman of the technical committee of the English ICA's tax faculty. Ever since

the faculty's foundation in 1991, the urbane figure of Adam Broke has chaired the committee. Now he is stepping down and his replacement is to be none other than Robert Maas, of Blackstone Franks. Maas is noted for his forthright and outspoken methods of conveying discontent with the tax system to the Inland Revenue. It will be interesting to see who the Revenue prefers in its dealing with the profession: the elegant rapier of Broke or the weighty bludgeon of Maas?

ROBERT BRUCE

THE TIMES THURSDAY APRIL 18 1996

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ASB looks
at asset
valuations

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Confidence grows at Smiths Industries

By PAUL DURMAN

SMITHS INDUSTRIES, the aerospace and medical instruments group headed by Sir Roger Hurn, has confirmed its strong progress with a 19 per cent increase in interim pre-tax profits to £69.5 million.

Smiths, which recently joined the FT-SE 100 index of Britain's leading companies, reported improved profits and margins in each of its aerospace, medical and industrial divisions.

Sir Roger, chairman and chief executive, said: "The outlook for all three business groups remains strong and gives me confidence that Smiths Industries will continue to grow and to produce



Sir Roger Hurn says the outlook for Smiths Industries, which reported interim pre-tax profits 19 per cent up at £69.5 million, remains strong

good increases in profit and earnings per share."

Although Smiths' aerospace business is experiencing some disruption after the strike at Boeing last autumn, it will benefit from substantial new orders from the American aircraft manufacturer. Boeing intends next year to double production of its 777 wide-bodied airliner, and to increase the output of 737s from 76 to 108.

Smiths also announced it has won a \$100 million contract to supply cockpit instrumentation for a new trainer aircraft for the US forces that is being made by Raytheon.

In the six months to February 3, the aerospace arm increased profits to £17.2 million, compared with £16.4 million, on slightly reduced sales of £171.4 million.

The medical companies increased their contribution from £26.3 million to £31.6 million. Sir Roger highlighted the export success of Portex, a manufacturer of medical tubes, and a good performance from Deltec, which makes infusion pumps.

The industrial group, which includes Vent-Axia ventilation business, increased profits to £21.6 million from £16.2 million.

Smiths is paying an interim dividend of 5.6p, an 11 per cent increase. Earnings were 17 per cent ahead at 15.4p a share.

Sir Roger said Smiths was still pursuing fill-in acquisitions to add to the £300 million of purchases it has made in the past few years.

Smiths is looking for a prospective chief executive to take over from Sir Roger, who is 58 this summer and due to retire at 60. He would not be drawn on whether Einar Lindh, who recently took over the running of the industrial companies, was a potential candidate.

ASB looks at asset valuations

By GRAHAM SEARJEANT
FINANCIAL EDITOR

COMPANIES would have to write down assets if their worth fell below their balance sheet value even if the directors thought the fall might be temporary, under proposed new accounting rules. The change, if approved, would end the practice whereby companies revalue properties upwards in good times but are reluctant to incorporate property market falls.

Companies would not need to adjust the balance sheet values of their own factories and offices for a fall in the property market if the business they are used for is making reasonable profits. This should relieve companies from making constant revaluations because of changes in property markets.

Impairment of Tangible Fixed Assets, the latest discussion document from the Accounting Standards Board, also suggests a new way of estimating the net present value of assets in use, if companies fear that the market value of an asset is less than shown in the balance sheet. This would be based on discounting estimated future cash flows, as in the board's separate proposals for valuing goodwill.

Assets would only be written down if they were in the balance sheet at more than the greater of "present value" and their "net recoverable value". The latter may be less than the crude market value if selling it involves costs such as redundancy payments.

Under the proposals, writedowns for impairment need only be charged as losses if the updated valuation is lower than the asset's depreciated historic costs.

Irish business boom lifts Ryan Hotels to Ir£2.8m

By FRASER NELSON

THE boom in business trips to Ireland, after the IRA ceasefire, has boosted annual pre-tax profits at Ryan Hotels by 43 per cent to a record Ir£2.79 million.

Corporate custom grew sharply last year, as the Dublin group increased the overall number of high-yielding executive suites by 11 per cent to cater for the business market.

Higher yields were also achieved by Ryan's hotels at Galway and Killybegs, where the Ir£2.8 million spent on their leisure centres has commanded higher room prices. Its hotels in Amsterdam, Brussels and Hamburg all increased their profits, but were overshadowed by Ryan's strong Irish portfolio.

Room occupation was down 2 per cent to 74 per cent, but Connor McCarthy, chairman, said this came with the overall

move upmarket. "Our business mix is changing and this drop in occupancy has been more than compensated by the jump in yield," he said. Turnover had jumped 25 per cent in its Dublin hotel.

"Since the ceasefire, the demand for rooms has been staggering," he said. "It's almost impossible to book a flight to London from Ireland nowadays, and as long as this kind of demand continues, our business rooms will keep on performing."

Since the IRA ceasefire, business trips to Ireland from the UK have jumped 25 per cent. This has shown few signs of slowing since the IRA's Docklands bomb. Next month, Aer Lingus is laying on a further 33 London-Dublin flights a week.

Mr McCarthy said he was confident that this momentum would continue, in spite of the

end of the ceasefire. "After the bomb, the phones stopped ringing for about 24 hours and then it was back to normal," he said. "I don't see this changing: economic activity in Ireland is growing by 6 per cent per annum and our business will grow with it."

Ryan's gearing, which hit profits in the past, fell 4 points to 40 per cent, while cash assets almost halved from Ir£386,000 to Ir£200,000. Earnings rose to Ir£3.67p (Ir£2.4p). An Irish final dividend makes Ir£1.5p (Ir£1.25p).

WH Smith invites agencies to pitch

By OUR CITY STAFF

WH SMITH, the retail chain, has invited advertising agencies to pitch for its advertising business. A decision is expected within two weeks.

Among those hoping to replace Bartle Bogle Hegarty (BBH), which stood down as WH Smith's agency in February, are believed to be Abbott Mead Vickers BBDO, BMP DDB Needham, Duckworth Pinn Grubb Waters and Saatchi & Saatchi, the Corbitt subsidiary.

WH Smith is estimated to have spent about £11 million on advertising over the past year. The company, which

has diversified beyond its core stationery and book business, has seen profits squeezed recently by the expansion of supermarkets into its traditional product areas, as well as by sluggish consumer demand.

Bartle Bogle Hegarty's first work for WH Smith in 1992 took the form of a press and poster campaign with the catchline *We don't sell...* This was later replaced with the gentler line, *There's more to life with WH Smith*. The media planning account is expected to remain with the media affiliate of BBH.

Savings products boost new business at Pru

By MARIANNE CURPHY

PRUDENTIAL'S sale of regular premium pension products in the UK increased 34 per cent to £866 million, the highest quarterly level for more than two years. Sales of regular contribution products were £71 million (1995: £74 million).

The Prudential said growth in single premium new business was driven by increased sales of annuities and non-linked savings products, in particular Prudence Bond and Prudence Savings Account. Sales of personal equity plans rose 67 per cent. These areas are to be the focus of future marketing and sales activities.

Sales of annual premium life and pension products fell 6 per cent to £59 million. Prudential has made no secret of

its plans for expansion and acquisition, and Mr Nowell said it was looking at a number of areas of suitable business. These are believed to include building societies and life companies.

Single premium sales at Jackson National Life, Prudential's American subsidiary, totalled \$633 million, down 22 per cent on 1995's record first quarter, but up 33 per cent on the last quarter of 1995. At Prudential Asia, annual premium sales rose 20 per cent to £18 million.

At Mercantile & General, Prudential's reinsurance subsidiary, sales of annual and single premiums remained firm at £15 million and £159 million respectively.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

The Automobile Association Annual General Meeting 1996

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual General Meeting of The Automobile Association will be held at the Grosvenor Hotel, Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 7EX, on Thursday 23 May 1996 at 11.15am to elect members of the Council, to receive and approve the accounts and to transact such other business as may come before the meeting.

Members are requested to bring their AA membership card with them.

Dated 3 April 1996

By order of the Council of the Automobile Association

Secretary

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE OF APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL ADMINISTRATOR AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I, the undersigned, have been appointed Special Administrator of the estate of the late Mr. [Name], deceased, and I hereby give notice to all creditors of the said estate to submit their claims to me within the time specified in the notice.

Dated 18 April 1996

[Signature]

LEGAL NOTICES

THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I, the undersigned, have been appointed Liquidator of the company [Name], and I hereby give notice to all creditors of the said company to submit their claims to me within the time specified in the notice.

Dated 18 April 1996

[Signature]

LEGAL NOTICES

THE COMPANIES ACT 1985

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that I, the undersigned, have been appointed Liquidator of the company [Name], and I hereby give notice to all creditors of the said company to submit their claims to me within the time specified in the notice.

Dated 18 April 1996

[Signature]

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[Signature]

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

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[illegible][illegible]

Source: Fintel

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return).
 † Ex dividend; ‡ Midsize price. . . No significant data.
 ‡ Periodic Charge deducted from capital; ‡ Ex Charge

End the delay over this tragic lesson

It is now almost 11 years since a British Airways Boeing 737 caught fire on the runway at Manchester airport with the loss of 54 lives. It is also eight years since an investigation into the accident delivered a number of recommendations for preventing it happening again.

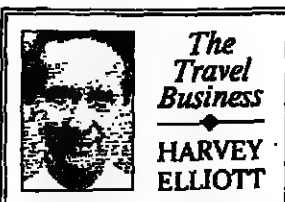
Yet only now is one of the main points being considered by international safety regulators and it could be another two years before it is put into effect.

Many of those who survived the terrible accident reported that they were wedged by the press of people in the narrow passageway between the forward galleys, unable to get out quickly.

The Air Accident Investigation Branch of the Department of Transport urged the Civil Aviation Authority to commission research into the problem and scientists at Cranfield University were asked to help.

They discovered that the configuration used by some airlines did indeed impede easy escape in the event of an emergency, and they therefore suggested that the minimum aisle width between the galleys in all aircraft should be increased from 22 inches to 30 inches.

But the research did not investigate the cost of such changes to the airline industry. The CAA has, it says, to look after the well-being of the British airline industry as a whole as well as the safety of passengers.



The Travel Business
HARVEY ELLIOTT

By now the European Union was harmonising for all it was worth, including aviation safety standards. So the CAA passed its findings to the European Joint Aviation Authorities, known as the JAA. It decided that more research was necessary and it is about to issue a consultation paper — albeit a preliminary one — within the next two months on the economic impact of increasing the minimum width from 22 to 30 inches.

The JAA has apparently decided that if these new standards were introduced for all new aircraft they "would not be prohibitive" largely because all the new jets coming into service already surpass them. But it also believes that the cost would be prohibitive to existing aircraft because galleys would have to be replaced or extensively modified.

So any new rule will apply only to new jets and not to the existing fleet and may not come into force until the end of 1997 at the earliest.

Further complications, say the bureaucrats, are caused by the huge number of aircraft which already have gangways wider than their proposed new minimum

width and the fact that American safety experts have decided that they are not going to impose any such standards. In view of this, they argue, there will have to be more international consultation.

Millions of British holiday-makers are about to make what, for many, is their first flight of the year, perhaps of their lives. The experts may scoff at their fears, but many of them are anxious and apprehensive.

As has been said of the "mad cow" disease scare, it is sometimes necessary to do things because the arguments have gone "beyond the science". To the scientists and the European bureaucrats, the need for action on the width of the forward aisles on older jets may seem arcane, fraught with problems and even unnecessary. But to many passengers, and especially to the Manchester survivors, it is a priority.

To judge by the continuing vacillation and delay, they are beginning to believe that the drive towards European, and even worldwide, harmonisation of standards simply provides an excuse for more meetings, consultations and obfuscation.

The CAA should introduce the new rule now, if only to appear to be taking the side of the passenger. The rest of Europe, and if necessary the United States, can catch up later.



Call of the wild: but the number of visitors who want to see these animals means that trips may have to be rationed

Halting the hordes

By TONY DAW

A TOURISM policy which will eventually lead to the "rationing" of visitors was announced by the Tanzanian Government yesterday, underlying its determination to prevent the country's famous sites from becoming damaged by too many tourists.

When the annual number of visitors reaches 500,000, which is expected by the year 2000 if current trends continue, the Government plans to "put on the brakes", Juma Ngasongwa, the Tourism Minister, told a meeting in London.

As part of the policy, the Government is introducing a moratorium on the development of hotels and lodges serving the Serengeti National

Park and on the rim of the Ngorongoro volcanic crater. Instead, it is launching a £100 million five-year programme, with help from the World Bank and European Union, to boost lesser known areas by providing more tourist facilities and better roads.

The decision follows an announcement by the Kenya Wildlife Service that it, too, is to urge tourists to explore remote parts of the country to avoid the Masai Mara, Amboseli and Tsavo national parks being saturated.

"We want to avoid overcrowding of our northern circuit" including the Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Mount

Kilimanjaro and encourage visitors to explore the larger and wilder reserves of the south," Dr Ngasongwa said. "These are being developed as adventure safaris with tented camps and small lodges instead of huge concrete hotels."

The policy also involves developing coastal, cultural and historical tourism and includes plans to turn Bagamoyo, the small town north of Tanzania's capital Dar es Salaam, into a major centre by extending the Livingstone Museum and creating a new school of tribal art. Caves with prehistoric paintings and the gorge where early human

remains were found will also be made more accessible and tourist-friendly.

"Most of these archaeological sites have been neglected, but under the new tourism plan they will be properly preserved with new tourist information centres," Dr Ngasongwa said.

Hatim Karimjee, chairman of Tanzania's Tourist Board, added: "Our problem is not promoting tourism but controlling it. If we don't, we shall be overtaken by mass tourism."

"When we reach the optimum number, we shall aim to maintain that level by encouraging visitors to stay longer and to partake in special interest holidays, like game fishing and bird-watching."

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Granada raises hotel prices

By David Churchill

GRANADA Group, the leisure and television company, last week sharply increased the prices for its 137 budget Travelodge hotels in the UK for the second time since acquiring the chain in its £3.8 billion takeover of Forte in January.

The company then followed this up, on Monday, by raising the price of the 78-strong Posthouse mid-market chain. Hotels such as the Peterborough and Birmingham airport are increasing their daily rate from £59 to £69 a night with other bands in the chain going up to £79, £89 and £99 a night.

The rises were foreshadowed during the bitter takeover battle with Forte but the scale of the increases has come as a surprise to many in the hotel industry.

Through current occupancy levels are strong, some hoteliers fear that the market may have peaked; most of Granada's competitors have decided against raising prices.

In February, Granada increased the room rate for Travelodge from £34.50 to £36.50 and last week raised it again to £39.95 for most of its regional hotels, and £42.95 for hotels in big towns and cities.

Granada says its research "indicated that we have been underpriced for some time, and we have now decided to correct this".

Its rival Whitbread, which has 119 budget Travel Inn hotels, says it will not raise prices above the present £35.50 a room. Whitbread says: "We have looked long and hard at the Granada move and decided we do not need to raise our prices further."

Peter Stephenson, managing director of Granada's UK Hotels, says that the rates have been increased "because we are operating close to capacity at the moment" and because Forte had made big investments in hotels in recent years.

But rival mid-market chains, such as Queens Moat Houses and Hilton National, are said to have no immediate plans to raise prices.

Some observers believe that Granada is more interested in increasing its cashflow from the hotels it acquired in the short term rather than in pricing its rooms according to long-term market needs.

The strength of hotel occupancy at present is also shown by the latest surveys for London from Pannell Kerr Forster (PKF), a hotel consultancy. It reports that room rates last year rose by 11.6 per cent on average to reach £83.92 and occupancy levels were 83 per cent. This year PKF forecasts an 85 per cent average occupancy level in London hotels. In a report on Welsh hotels it says occupancy last year reached the highest level for five years.



A Katyusha rocket fired from Lebanon by Hezbollah fighters blows up a car in Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel

BA cancels Beirut flight

By Tony Dawe

BRITISH Airways cancelled yesterday's London-Beirut flight, tours to Lebanon's historic sites have been abandoned and holidays to the Holy Land disrupted as Israel continued its offensive against alleged terrorist targets in Lebanon.

Airlines and tour operators are making decisions day-by-day about services and holidays to the Middle East but admit that many customers have cancelled and that the recent increase in tourism to the region is being slowed.

The only positive news yesterday came from British Mediterranean Airways, set

up last year under its chairman Lord Heslith to take advantage of the rise in demand for travel to Beirut, Damascus and Amman. None of its five weekly services has been cancelled because most passengers are Lebanese people returning home.

The Foreign Office says that "travel south of Beirut is inadvisable" and the British Embassy in Beirut has told tour operators to keep clear of the Bekaa Valley and the Baalbeck area, both strongholds of Hezbollah, but containing some of the most important Middle East archaeological remains.

Leading holiday companies are pulling visitors out of Lebanon and cancelling future trips. Jim Harris, director of Jasmin Tours, said a six-day High-Lights of Lebanon tour due to leave London yesterday had been cancelled. He was watching the situation closely before making a decision about the next tours. Visits to Baalbeck, included in Syrian-based holidays, are also being cancelled. Thomson, which takes 10,000 British holidaymakers to Israel every year, has cancelled its weekly coach tours through the country and mini-cruises from Cyprus which included visits to the Holy Land. But it is continuing with its programme to Eilat.

Labour reviews tourist tax

By Roger Bray

TOURISTS taking holidays in Britain pay a higher proportion of their costs in VAT than in any other European country except Sweden. The tax adds almost £400 to the cost of a typical two-week break for a family of four.

These figures will loom large in talks between the tourism industry and the Labour Party during the next few months. Jack Cunningham, the Shadow Heritage Secretary, this week promised that Labour would listen to arguments for lower VAT on the tourist industry. He would make no commitment to cut the rate from 17.5 per cent, but he said Labour was reviewing corporate taxation — and the issue would be firmly on the agenda.

A question to be thrashed out during talks with tourism representatives is whether, if the tax is reduced, it should be made lower only for hoteliers and other providers of accommodation, or also for restaurants and attractions.

Research by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International suggests that after four years, cutting the rate to 8 per cent on accommodation would lose the Government only £340 million in VAT annually, but that the additional £1.8 billion spent by tourists in Britain as a result could create 38,000 jobs. The overall impact of this would be to generate more money for the Exchequer. A similar reduction throughout the industry would cut the tax take by almost £2.3 billion a year over the same period, raise spending by more than £4 billion and create 87,000 jobs. The overall effect would be a reduction in tax receipts but a huge boost for the economy.

British holidaymakers spend more on holiday than they budget for and are reluctant to carry too much cash when travelling, according to a survey by Audience Selection for Europcar, which trades as Mastercard in Europe. Most Britons use credit cards to cover unexpected extra purchases.

Orlando offers special prices to beat Disney

By David Churchill

ORLANDO theme parks are banding together to offer a five-day unlimited admission to all three non-Disney parks — Universal Studios, Sea World and Wet 'n' Wild — for the price of about one day's admission.

The ticket will cost about £63 for adults and £51 for children. In addition Orlando is offering free shuttle transport from certain hotels to the theme parks.

This special five-day pass is part of an attempt by Orlando's theme parks to stave off the growing dominance of Walt Disney World in attracting both American and international tourists. Many Orlando theme park operators believe they are missing out on Florida's tourism boom — and visitors from the UK are up by

25 per cent so far this year — because tourists find it too expensive to visit the other parks as well as the better-known Disney.

A five-day Disney pass, giving unlimited access to its three main theme parks, three water parks and night-time entertainment complex, costs about £124 for adults and £99 for children aged under 10.

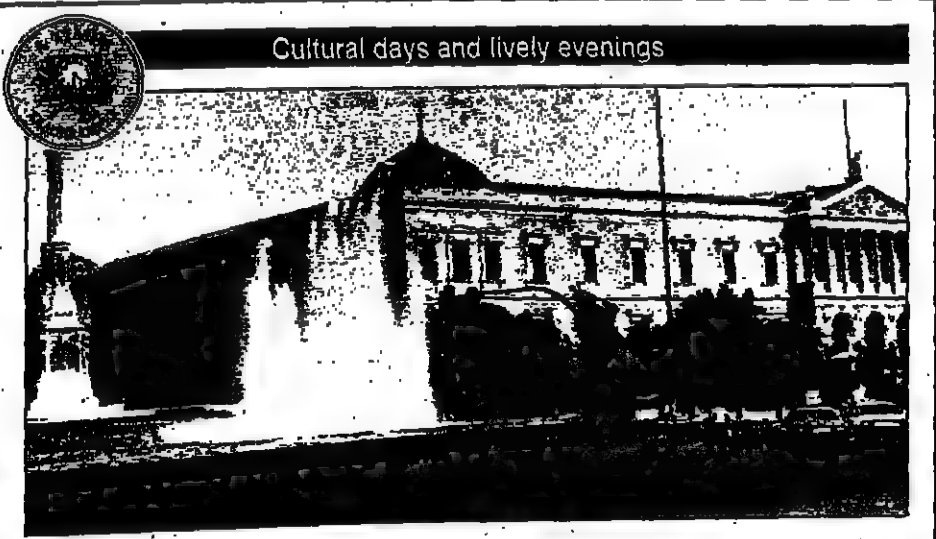
Orlando's special ticket to its three parks will not, however, be sold in the UK and will be available only at the gates to its parks. Several British ticket operators, such as Keith Prowse and Ticketstop USA, argue that the five-day pass does not offer such exceptional value as at first appears.

This is because few tourists, they believe, would want to

visit Sea World and Universal Studios every day for five days. They believe it better to buy tickets in advance in Britain, so as to avoid having to meet the extra costs when abroad.

But the Universal/Sea World ticket deal is seen by tour operators to Florida as one of the best bargains of the year. "Universal and Sea World must be getting really worried about Disney's success if they feel the need to offer such a good deal," said one specialist operator.

Disney has spent heavily on advertising and other promotions this year, including a free 20-minute video which has been sent to more than 900,000 British households showing what Disney World has to offer.



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THE "no frills" airline revolution that has started in America is about to take wing in Europe, Roger Bray writes. EasyJet, the cut-price operator that began by flying between Luton and Scotland only, plans to launch two £49 one-way services, to Nice and Barcelona in June.

EasyJet is pitched mainly at the leisure market, although it may appeal to business travellers who, according to a MORI survey for Carlson, a travel agency, are willing to use small airlines for short flights. EasyJet's present destinations are Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen at prices from £40 one-way, including the £5 air passenger's duty.

EasyJet takes credit and charge card payments by phone, or by cheque or cash at airport counters, and does not issue tickets to customers.

A wing and a prayer

By Steve Keenan

BRITAIN'S biggest holiday company is recruiting more clergymen to preach at its overseas resorts next winter.

Eight more chaplains will join the 32 already based in Spain and other holiday hotspots sold by Thomson Holidays. This winter a record 2.6 million Britons fled the cold in search of sunshine. And Thomson, which sells three out of ten holidays — expects a new record next winter. Its larger flock of 40 clergymen will hold a total of 1,000 Sunday services, with

resident parsons in seven of popular holiday areas.

The new chaplains will be based in Cyprus and Portugal. Others already work in the Costa del Sol, Costa Blanca, Majorca, Tenerife and Tunisia. "We call them the flying vicars," said a Thomson spokesman. "The chaplains based in the popular resorts travel across their regions to preach."

The clergymen are members of the Inter-Continental Church Society, a non-denominational society.

BARGAINS OF THE WEEK

- HOLIDAYS** Simply Tuscany & Umbria is offering special "villa only" prices of £140 per week for a one bedroom villa and £200 per week for a two bedroom villa from April 27 to May 18. Package prices including flights and car hire start from £264 per person. Details: 0181-995 8277.
- A THREE-night cookery break from next Thursday is available at Hotel Le Monastère in northern France for £235 per person including dinner, bed and breakfast and Dover-Calais ferry crossings, from Intravel Shortbreaks. Details: 01653 628862.
- THE GAMBIA Experience is offering free upgrades to premium rooms in a luxury beach hotel for bookings made before April 30. Prices start from £377 for a week's bed and breakfast accommodation and return flights from Gatwick on Fridays. Details: 01703 730888.
- A FORTNIGHT's self-catering Twentys holiday in Ibiza for £188 with departure from Gatwick on May 4 is among late offers to the Mediterranean from Co-op Travelcare. Details: 0161-827 1030.
- SELF-CATERING for a fortnight in Corfu for £199 with departure from Birmingham on May 5 is among late offers from Cosmos. Details: 0161-480 5799.
- SAVINGS of £110 per person on holidays to Kenya are available from British Airways Holidays for departures up to May 30. Prices for a fortnight's beach-cum safari holiday now start at £1225. Details: 01293 723161.
- IN CONTRAST, Arctic Experience is offering a five-night spring break in Iceland with adventurous day trips from £494 per person until the end of May. Details: 01737 218800.
- LE SPORT all-inclusive hotel in St Lucia is available for £1,499 per person for a fortnight between May 19 and June 23, a saving of £360, from Tropical Places, with flights from Gatwick. Details: 01342 825123.
- FLORIDA for a fortnight for £429 per adult, a saving of £150, with half price for children under 16 is this week's offer from ARTAC WorldChoice travel agents and Virgin Holidays. The offer, available from May 31 to June 27, includes Gatwick-Miami flights and accommodation in Orlando. Details: 0500 757737.

HOTELS

- THE four-star Chelsea Hotel in Knightsbridge, close to Harrods, has a special weekend rate of £99 per night for a single room and £110 for the double for the two May Bank Holiday weekends. This represents a saving of £78 a night on the normal rate. Details: 0171-838 9650.
- WHITE'S Hotel in Gibraltar has a three-night break for £199 per person, including air fares, until the end of May. The 126-room four-star hotel is located in the heart of the city. Details: 01993 700600.
- BROWNS Hotel in London's Albermarle Street is offering a special St George's Day menu in its restaurant next Tuesday, at £24.50 for three courses, to celebrate its long links with the patron saint of England. In 1889 it acquired the neighbouring St George's Hotel and a stained glass window featuring St George slaying the dragon can still be seen in the hotel bar. Details: 0171-493 6020.
- STAY at the Stifford Moat House in Essex at the special rate of £32 per person per night to watch the Thurrock International Kite Festival over the May Day weekend. Teams from all over Europe will compete for the £1,500 first prize. Details: 01708 719988.
- LUXURY bed and breakfast accommodation is available at a house in Hyde Park Gate, London, the newest B&B to join the Uptown Reservation service. Prices start at £55 single and £70 double per night, including a private bathroom and continental breakfast. Details: 0171-351 3445.
- STAKIS Hotels has published a leisure break brochure featuring short holidays at the company's 45 UK properties, including its new hotels at Balmoral, Aberdeen and Tyneside. Details: 0990 969696.
- THE Cophorne Hotel in Hanover, Germany, has a special rate of £49 per night for British guests visiting the Hanover Fair in June in which more than 10,000 people take part. The rate includes transfers to the fair and an evening meal in the main fairground marquee. Details: 0800 414741.

FLIGHTS

- THE Air France whorl Brightways is offering a special fare to New York via Paris. A round-trip price of £2,338 covers subsonic business class flights going out and Concord on the return. Details: 0800 919171.
- AIR China is offering promotional first and business-class fares on its twice-weekly Heathrow-Peking service. Business round trips cost £988 as against the British Airways price of £2,036, while first class costs £1,767 compared with no less than £4,781 flying BA. Details: 0171-630 0919.
- THAI International currently has Supersaver excursions to Bangkok and other domestic destinations. Bangkok return costs £495 with flights to the resort of Phuket or the northern city of Chiangmai, available for £545. Details: 0171-499 9113.
- SABENA has some attractive business-class bonus fares for regional passengers flying to Europe via Brussels. Manchester, for example, costs £460 while Glasgow-Bordeaux is offered at £514 — savings of about 15 per cent on normal rates. Details: 0181-780 1444.
- SWISS airline Crossair has launched a direct Edinburgh-Zurich service with an introductory fare of £199. Details: 0345 581333.
- THIS summer British Airways is serving another six destinations from Gatwick — flights to Zurich and Stockholm have just started, and Edinburgh begins next month. Kiev follows in June while Phoenix and San Diego come online in July. Details: 0345 222111.
- EUROSTAR is providing stiffer competition to the airlines between London, Paris and Brussels. Sales of its off-season rail fares — starting at £59 standard and £155 first class — have been extended until mid-July. Details: 0345 881881.

A Special Announcement

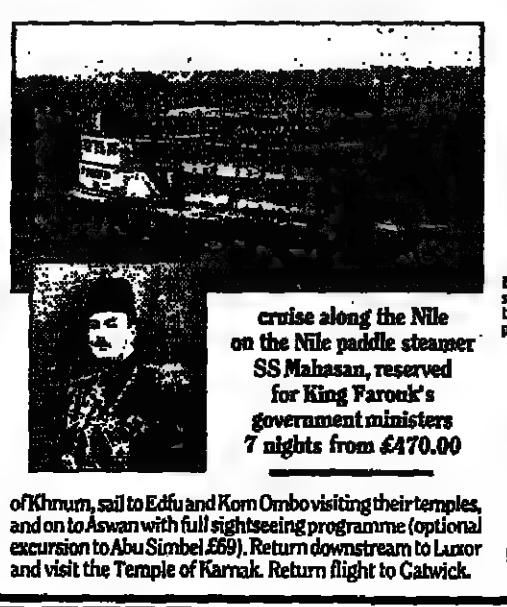
THE ROYAL NILE CRUISE

For winter 1996 we are proud to introduce the SS Mahasan paddle steamer. The vessel (designated the SS Time Machine) was built for the royal government of King Farouk and has now been authentically restored to its 1930s motif. Some aspects will appeal to travellers who are sympathetic to the theme and conditions of compact but comfortable cabins.

The programme for the SS Mahasan has been carefully designed to evoke the atmosphere of the early 1930s thus allowing guests to discover Egypt both past and present. The itinerary allows you to see the natural beauty of the Nile and the ancient civilisation of Egypt whilst enjoying period style and modern facilities. To glide down the tranquil waters of the Nile at a stately pace, with just 36 fellow passengers on board, has got to be one of the best ways of spending a week away from a grey British winter.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Fly from Gatwick to Luxor and join the SS Mahasan for a 7-night cruise. Visit the West Bank, the Valley of the Kings and the Temple of Khnum, sail to Edfu and Kom Ombo visiting their temples, and on to Aswan with full sightseeing programme (optional excursion to Abu Simbel £55). Return downstream to Luxor and visit the Temple of Karnak. Return flight to Gatwick.



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FILM 1
Time-travelling the complex way in Terry Gilliam's baroque new extravaganza, *Twelve Monkeys*



FILM 2
Plenty of smart Brooklyn talk in *Smoke*, Wayne Wang's screen version of a Paul Auster story

THE TIMES FILMS ARTS



FILM 3
... but Meryl Streep and Liam Neeson flounder in the dreary family angst of *Before and After*



MUSIC
Michael Tilson Thomas steers the LSO through the premiere of Robin Holloway's new work

Something completely over the top

CINEMA: Geoff Brown sees Bruce Willis buried up to his bald head in the spectacular overkill of Terry Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys*

Once upon a time, movie heroes were immaculately groomed and wore suits, shirts and ties. Now look at Bruce Willis in Terry Gilliam's unwieldy extravaganza, *Twelve Monkeys*. His head is shaved to reveal what Gilliam has called "the most beautiful cranium in the world". A prisoner's number is stamped above the left ear, a barcode on the back of the neck. Usually he wears grunge; sometimes, when time-travelling, he wears nothing at all.

The world he inhabits is scarcely prettier. In 2035, according to the hideously complicated script by David and Janet Peoples, the one remaining per cent of a population wiped out by a virus lives underground among darkness, rotting machinery and dripping water. Time-travelling does not improve things. Hitting 1990 by mistake, Willis, playing an enforced volunteer sent into the past to stop the virus at source, gets bundled into an asylum.

Reaching 1996 and a Philadelphia peeling with urban decay, he gets on the track of a terrorist group, the Army of the *Twelve Monkeys*, led by one of the asylum inmates, Brad Pitt, nutty son of virologist Christopher Plummer. The other big cast name joining with fate is Madeleine Stowe, a psychiatrist who specialises in the Cassandra complex — the agony of being unable to prevent some dire future event. Audiences may feel some of this themselves as they watch *Twelve Monkeys*, so dazzling in parts, grow ever more unmanageable.

No one expects any Gilliam film to walk a straight line. But the criss-crossing time frames, mood swings and irrelevances in this script — inspired by Chris Marker's 1962 sci-fi short *La Jetée* —

Twelve Monkeys
Warner West End
15, 129 mins
Terry Gilliam's unwieldy extravaganza
Smoke
Lumiere, 15, 100 mins
Agreeable talk piece written by Paul Auster
Unzipped
MGM Shaftesbury Ave
15, 74 mins
Exuberant fashion documentary
Before and After
Odeon Leicester Square
12, 108 mins
Streep and Neeson get the glums

make the going more difficult than usual. Gilliam's directorial manner wreaks its own damage. He is one of the few film-makers around with a "vision", and the absurd chaos of *Twelve Monkeys* is of a piece with the worlds of *Brazil* and *The Fisher King*. His films never grow organically. One sequence, designed with breathtaking panache, is piled on top of another, and the tower topples over.

Like some Gothic architects, Gilliam does not know when to stop. One instance: having allowed Pitt horrible freedom to chew the scenery, acting mad with gesticulating hands, he then shoots the asylum scenes through a distorting camera lens.

Luckily, other performers keep their heads. Willis's unheroic, vulnerable role may bemuse *Die Hard* fans, but the man deserves praise for tackling adventurous material. As always, Stowe is fascinating to watch — feisty, vulnerable, elegant and earthy all at once — although you never feel the flames of romance flicker between the two

stars. You never, in fact, feel much for the characters at all: partly because you can barely spot them among the garbage, graffiti, time jumps and surreal clutter. Gilliam hopes his film will give audiences the thrill of seeing something new. If spectacle were all we might well be thrilled; but if we want a film with a sense of purpose, control and a human heart, we must look elsewhere.

Perhaps to *Smoke*. Characters troop into Harvey Keitel's tobaccoist's to buy supplies of the lethal weed. But the cigarettes in their mouths never stop them talking: Wayne Wang's agreeable if lightweight film coasts along on the dialogue of the fashionable novelist Paul Auster, who developed the script from a Christmas story he wrote for *The New York Times*.

Wang's usual stomping ground is America's Chinese immigrant community. Here he falls into the Brooklyn melting pot, armed with stories about fathers, sons and widowers breaking free from a painful past with the help of friends and the quirks of fate. Keitel never quite convinces as a master of Brooklyn bonhomie, although it is cheering to find him fully dressed and not pumping people with bullets.

Despite location shooting, Brooklyn itself seems less than half-real; the apartment of William Hurt's grieving novelist has "studio set" stamped all over it, while the desecrated air of Auster's talk belongs more to smart Manhattan.

The cast keeps you watching. Aside from Keitel and Hurt, you get Stockard Channing with an eyepatch, Forest Whitaker with a false arm, and Harold Perrineau, memorable as a boy running from gangsters with \$5,000 in cash. The characters weave in and out, talking, inhaling, spinning anecdotes. Nothing



Which way did the plot go? Madeleine Stowe and Bruce Willis try not to panic in the time-travelling *Twelve Monkeys*

amounts to much, but *Smoke* is never less than pleasant. Documentary is such a grey word that it seems unfair to pin it to *Unzipped*, an exuberant portrait of fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi as he whizzes about New York creating a new collection. A true child of America, Mizrahi ravenously feeds off movies, and gets the idea for his 1994 autumn show from a television screening of Flaherty's silent classic *Nanook of the North*, one of the most venerable documentaries of all. Another key influence is Lorena Young's appearance in *Coil of the Wild*; although she's half-frozen in the tundra, the

ordeal leaves her poise and eyeliner untouched. Eskimo fur meets Hollywood kitsch, or, as Mizrahi puts it, "Giselle meets Fred Flinstone".

The last movie to ransack the fashion world, Altman's feeble *Prêt-à-Porter*, took a sour view of things. But the director of *Unzipped*, fashion photographer Douglas Keefe, clearly relishes the peacock egos, the drudgery and madness required to mount a show. It's no easy task. Intransigent fabrics must be cut, tailored and cajoled. So must the models, who dislike Mizrahi's notion

of changing clothes behind a transparent screen. Then, worst blow of all, Jean Paul Gaultier comes out with his own collection of Eskimo chic. Through all the torments Mizrahi ploughs on, bubbling with humour and mimicry of movie stars. He's a great show in himself; and this joyful film, shot on the run with great panache by Ellen Kuras, does him proud.

The glum family drama *Before and After* does nobody proud, not its stars, Meryl Streep and Liam Neeson, nor its director, Barbet Schroeder. "I just want my boy back," Streep's paediatrician bleats. "I just want to hold him again," Neeson, meanwhile, as her artist husband, wrenches his face in a way that suggests severe stomach ache. The cause of all anguish is their teenage son, Edward Furlong, accused of murdering a local lass. Not that Furlong seems bothered: he blots his copybook as a rising star by walking through in a lazy daze, scarcely raising his eyelids or opening his mouth. His opposite number is Alfred Molina, the family's Greek defence lawyer, who rolls his eyes, twitches a bushy moustache, and eats a sandwich that passed the continuity girl by: in one shot you see it, in another you don't. Oh well.

Charming Smoke

SMOKE
James Lawson, 18: A very gentle, charming film. Well-shot with wonderful dialogue. Jenny Dawson, 20: This was one of the most unusual films I've seen for some time. Really good, enhanced by Harvey Keitel and William Hurt's great performances. Thomas Stevens, 18: Uneventful, feel-good movie. Although the acting was superb, it was trite and a little dull. Chris Rushbrook, 18: Enjoyable — simply but effectively filmed.

UNZIPPED
Janie: I don't usually like documentary films, but this was an exception. The number of stars that appeared was amazing. Jenny: It provides an inspiring and frantic insight into the

SNAP VERDICT

world of fashion. This model-filled movie was fast and witty and well worth seeing. Thomas: There were funny moments and the film was well directed, but on the whole it wasn't particularly interesting or likeable. Chris: You have to know something about the fashion people in New York to fully understand it. The idea of mixing monochrome and colour didn't really work, but the use of old clips was groovy!

CONCERT On the Holloway road

LONDON has heard two major orchestral premieres a week apart. Robin Holloway's Third Concerto for Orchestra, launched at the Barbican on Tuesday in the wake of an important new John Casken piece at the Festival Hall, was on first hearing the less interesting of the two, though one performance of such an ambitious 45-minute piece is no basis for final judgment.

Few performances are likely to be more persuasive, however. The London Symphony Orchestra gave its considerable best to Michael Tilson Thomas, who conducted with impressive control. He found plenty of atmospheric effects in the scoring — for large orchestra with prominent per-

LSO/Tilson Thomas Barbican

cussion, piano, celesta and harp — but too few arresting ideas for such a long piece. Indeed, it sounds like a composition "about" composing. There are few obvious external impulses, even if initial inspiration came from a South American journey 15 years ago. Early sketches were lost through the theft of his bag in La Paz, and now Holloway derives nearly all his material from a pair of interlocking thirds, which metamorphose in every possible way. He has admitted it to be an attempt at something avant-garde: previous works have found him torn between modernist and Neo-Romantic opposites; this piece falls nondescriptly in between.

After a mysterious, darkly-coloured opening pregnant with promise, the first movement is little more than a dense though smoothly flowing "texture-piece". The Chaconne that follows is the most structured movement in a tightly organised work. But not until the third movement does anything memorable happen: shimmering textures are gathered up in appealing, shifty tango rhythms.

Holloway's new work took him 13 years to complete, so perhaps Beethoven, for whom composition was always a tortuous struggle, made good complementary programming. But listening to this performance of the Emperor Piano Concerto was not easy, either. Barry Douglas was a wild soloist who opened a wide stylistic gap between himself and the orchestra.

JOHN ALLISON

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■ OPERA

Vigorous singing and conducting, shame about the staging of the new *Faust* in Cardiff



■ DANCE

Hot moves from Montreal: an international choreographic display comes to Sadler's Wells

THE TIMES
ARTS



■ THEATRE

Strindberg is given a heavy modernist twist as *Miss Julie* is revived at the Gate



■ TOMORROW

Rude about our royals? Peter Whelan explains the republican sentiments in his new play

OPERA: Sterling performances cannot save WNO's half-baked production; a cautious debut at the Garden

Victorian Faust bedevilled by design

The Welsh National Opera has had the bright idea of performing Tuesday's fifth anniversary production of Gounod's opera in the near-contemporary — 1864 — English translation by Henry Chorley. To hear such legendary lines as "All hail, thou dwelling pure and lowly", familiar from countless old recordings, is really rather charming, and of course the Victorian syntax fits Gounod's music like a glove. This practice could well spread, though some even earlier versions, such as the famous *Freischütz* with its "whence dost thou such wondrous ballad", might need tactical editing for today's audiences.

Sadly WNO has not quite come up with an 1860-ish performance to match.

Sir Charles Mackerras plainly loves the score — could any musician fail to? — and revels in its rich sonorities, its wealth of melody, its unashamed sentiment. At times his love carries him away: he both lingers unduly over the more glutinous moments, and tends to hurry the sprightlier numbers — the Kermesse chorus and the Waltz go at breakneck speeds, allowing little opportunity for shapely phrasing or nuance. There is little Gallic fragrance or delicacy in his reading, and the fast, juicy sound he draws from the orchestra drags the music forward by about 40 years, nearer the sound-world of Elgar and Mahler than that of Gounod.

This has an effect on the singing. The chorus, especially, sing loud, and then louder — impressive, but there is opportunity for more light and shade. Some of the principals, too, might sing even more expressively were they not so conscious of the barrage of sound to be surmounted. Jason Howard's Valentine, sung at a steady double forte, is a case in point, and his tone is growing worryingly dry and shallow.

Janice Watson, a soprano who really sings words, makes a lovely

Margarita; Mackerras was at his most considerate in the *Jewel Song*, nursing her through a wittily thrown-off account of this barely defensible showpiece, and she found plenty of good, solid tone for the Church Scene and final trio.

Paul Charles Clarke (Faust) virtually disarmed all criticism with his mezzotone top C diminuendo-ing down to nothing in "All hail" — a moment of pure magic — but I trust he will find more variety of dynamic as the run progresses, and drop his new mannerism of cutting off loud notes with a sort of glottal stop (leave that kind of thing to Pavarotti on a bad night). Alastair Miles, after years of singing the sort of roles even young basses are sentenced to — priests, heavy fathers and so on — thoroughly enjoyed wrapping himself round Mephistopheles in an instinctively stylish performance.

Oh dear, the production. Christopher Alden's WNO *Turandot*, interesting in parts, led me to remark that "the who strives may be forgiven", little suspecting how much would need to be forgiven, and how soon. This *Faust*, in plug-ugly decor by Bruno Schweng, looked like a sly parody of bad "concept" stagings. Cliché was piled on cliché: shiny black costumes all round, long-haired wigs making everyone look like Irish setters, zombie-like slow motion, especially when the music is urgent.

The tiny role of Martha (Susan Gorton) was mysteriously beefed up — she became Mephisto's accomplice, Margarita's midwife and executioner. Siebel (Joanne Edworthy, miscast) had to drag half a tree on stage, not a bouquet. Margarita walked on water. Wow! Ideas proposed in the programme — a *Grimes*-ish persecution scenario, a rueful fallen-angel persona for Mephisto — were not put across in the staging. To call it all half-baked would be a slander on culinary art.

RODNEY MILNES



Faust as cliché: Janice Watson (front) as Margarita and Alastair Miles as an "instinctively stylish" Mephistopheles in WNO's staging

Without a star soprano in the title role, *Arabella*, the gentle Strauss-Hofmannsthal comedy of Viennese decay, can depress the takings at the box office. But this Covent Garden revival has turned out a success and credit is due to Mark Elder. At the Coliseum he showed himself a fine Strauss conductor and his *Arabella* at the other place now puts a triple underlining on that reputation.

The right measure of sugar is sprinkled on the waltzes, *Arabella*'s supreme self-confidence amidst her tatty family is lyrically conveyed. The orchestra is finally unleashed in the stormy prelude to Act III, reflecting Mandryka's furious journey to the hotel of his bride-to-be.

Shade steps warily into the limelight

Or not to be in his current mood. So there was a full house for this performance, which brought the American soprano, Ellen Shade, to her Covent Garden debut. She is big-boned, with the saucer eyes of that famed *Arabella*, Kiri Te Kanawa: she carries herself and her mid-19th century costumes well; but she lacks the vocal radiance for the role and especially the flash of girlish exuberance at the end of Act I.

Arabella
Covent Garden

In a cautious performance, where she

was at pains to prevent her voice playing in the upper register, Shade was at her best in the central act. The brief duet, pleading love to Mandryka, was tenderly done and her dismissal of the three suitors, with a farewell waltz apiece, properly imperious. Quite right too: the trio of counts are the weakness of the revival. But Shade lacks the vocal artillery for the closing scene, designed to sweep Mandryka and the whole audience off their collective feet.

Around her are outstanding performances from the likes of Stafford Dean, as a Father up to his epaulettes in gambling debts; Christiane Oelze, who makes an alluring Zdenka, and Herbert Lippert as Matteo, a young bullock in the Viennese old china shop. But lowering over all is Wolfgang Brendel's Mandryka. As he prepares *Arabella* for the Croatian forests, he might even persuade her that there is indeed a world beyond Vienna.

JOHN HIGGINS

Out of the gender blender

THIS is the second *Miss Julie* to have been staged in London within two weeks, and the fifth to have hit the capital in the past 18 months, a revival rate high enough to demand an explanation. Could the reason be that Strindberg addresses the contradictions of gender — a fashionable subject nowadays — as robustly as he does the everlasting complexities of class? Maybe; but I think it more likely that actresses like to perform the "half-woman, half-man" at the play's centre, and producers are only too happy to indulge them. After all, they need only pay for one set, three performers, and maybe a few extras to rampage across the stage when the Count's valet Jean is seducing his daughter, Julie herself.

By all accounts, you would not know from Polly Teale's revival of the play at the Young Vic that it was once regarded as an example of pioneering naturalism. You certainly would not suspect from this Nick Philippou production for the Actors Touring Company that Strindberg's preface to *Miss Julie* is a locus classicus of naturalist theory. Everything about the piece, from characterisation to dialogue to ideas to stage furniture,

THEATRE
Miss Julie
Gate, Wil

was meant to owe more to gritty reality than to tradition and theatrical convention.

But here the kitchen in which the play occurs has become a weird aluminium cell. There is a door at the back through which yellow light glares, and scorns to the side behind which grotesque figures may sometimes be seen. Peter Lindford's Jean is glimpsed more or less raping Kate Fenwick's Julie after a not-inappropriate prelude of loud bangs. Indeed, bangs are the least of the snore-sphere-building noises on offer. We also get heavy breathing, clangs, rumbles, sinister purples, the sound of a radio being ineptly tuned, and electronic screeches, whistles, creaks, plunks and growls galore.

This is not exactly raw realism as Strindberg received it from Zola. The acting is deliberately over-the-top too. There are times when Fenwick and,

especially, Lindford seem to be harking back to the very flamboyance of style the naturalists wanted to replace. "Take me away from this fifth I'm sinking into," she wails after her seduction as she slides, eyes mad and hands pumping, down the wall to the ground. As for him, he twitches and squirms with febrile servility, more the hunted Uriah Heep or even the cornered Quasimodo than a macho Jeeves going through a challenging time.

Still, yesterday's realism is today's artificiality, and maybe Strindberg's original performers were more exotic than we like to believe. Moreover, I must admit that both actors grew on me as the evening rolled to its grim conclusion. They did, after all, combine huge emotional commitment with constant hints of the sexual doubts and social insecurities working away inside them. Do they miss some of the play's psychological subtleties? Yes; but they also release Strindberg from over-literal, over-scrupulous interpretation of his own dramatic ideas.

BENEDICT
NIGHTINGALE



Not as nature intended? Kate Fenwick and Peter Lindford in *Miss Julie*

DANCE: An eclectic and electric programme bounces in from Montreal

International mix and match

two works for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens may come from one of the most chauvinistic cities in the world, but the company is truly international. Just look at the repertoire it brings on its current British tour. Mark Morris, William Forsythe, Kevin O'Day, Hans van Manen, Jiri Kylian, Nacho Duato: not a Canadian among them. It is an impressive line-up of work — and much of it is new to this country. The artistic director, Lawrence Rhodes, should be congratulated for nurturing such a healthy mix in his company.

The feather in his cap must be the commissioning of Mark Morris, one of the hottest choreographers in the business. The American has made

plains. He expects his performers to bubble and bounce as they leap into his springing jets. The troupe dances *Quincunx* well, although I suspect they would be even happier with a live rendition of Donizetti to bolster their ebullience.

Kevin O'Day's *Principia* is another work dancers should love. Set to music by Steve Martland (again taped), it is a

Les Grands
Ballets Canadiens
Sadler's Wells

slick and snappy series of dances for four couples. It should be — after spending all those years dancing for Twyla Tharp, O'Day must have learnt a thing or two about nimble and sophisticated choreography. His own style is breezy rather than brazen, well suited to the slightly modest demeanour of the Montreal troupe.

The programme (the first of two at Sadler's Wells) also featured a short duet for two men by the Israeli choreographer Itzik Galili. Exploring the contrasting facets of a male relationship, *Double Time* also proved — when it finally got going — to be an interesting study in balance.

Hans van Manen's *Black Cake*, on the other hand, turned out to be not at all interesting. It was created to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of Nederlands Dans Theater in 1989. You can tell that it

is a party: the women are in high heels and black sequinned frocks; a waiter brings champagne. But the choreographed interplay between couples is banal; a comic routine between mismatched dancers only reminds one that Kenneth MacMillan did it better in *Elite Synchronisations*, and the protracted drunk scene at the end (accompanied by Massenet's *Meditation*) provided a ludicrous and irritating finale to what had been an evening of choreographic futility.

And what a shame it was that this was the only piece to feature live music — the wonderful Royal Ballet Sinfonia.

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Malcolm Bradbury admires John Updike's ambitious chronicle of America's moral and metaphysical history in the 20th century

Between God and Hollywood

IN THE BEAUTY OF THE LILIES

By John Updike
Hamish Hamilton, £16

As the years have rolled by, John Updike—who started out as the grand master of the finessed short story, and a perfect *New Yorker* miniaturist—has become, over more than 40 books, the great chronicler of contemporary America. Back in 1968 *Couples* daringly summoned up the sexual and religious crisis of the day, against the background of a darkening history which brought a touch of despair to the perfect sensual couples of his earlier stories. By this date too he had already begun his "Rabbit" series of novels which—over four volumes, 30 years in the writing—became the story of an imperfect, ordinary, very human American hero whose life told the tale of a whole disappointed generation.

An even larger intention underpins *In the Beauty of the Lilies*, which is in many respects Updike's most ambitious novel yet. Heavily researched and documented, it is the story of four generations of an American Protestant family, manifestly meant as the story of the moral and metaphysical history of America itself. It starts on a spring day in Patterson, New Jersey, just outside New York City, where, even as

Mary Pickford is making a silent historical movie for Griffith, and falling off her horse in the process, a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Clarence Wilmot, who has exposed himself to the modern forces of reason and science, sickeningly feels the draining away of his religious faith.

Honorably resigning his very comfortable vocation, Wilmot becomes an ineffectual salesman of popular encyclopaedias in a Patterson now suffering a still-famous strike in its silk-mills, the defeat of which marked a triumph for modern American capitalism. He soon becomes a defeated, forsaken figure, haunting the movie houses for relief.

Influenced by his father's failure, blaming God for his betrayal

of him, his son Tommy rejects the chance of life in booming commercial Twenties Manhattan, choosing instead the path of "minimal damage". He retreats with the family to become a mailman in the small town of Basingstoke, Delaware, finally marrying the club-footed daughter of a market gardener.

Movies, too, are the best way out of Delaware. Their lively, energetic daughter Essie does a spell of dubious modelling in New York, and eventually makes it to Hollywood, where she becomes a beautiful screen goddess (Alma DeMott) playing opposite Gable and Crosby. As post-war history unfolds—the super-power age, the Eisenhower years, McCarthyism—she moves from



John Updike: sensitive to the sensuality of everyday life

tarnished ingenue to big-screen harlot, making many marriages, growing more obsessed by her image, telling through her movie performances the story of her own and America's ageing.

The cycle is completed by her one son, Clark. A neglected Hollywood brat, he inherits his grandfather's instinct for withdrawal,

and retreats to Colorado's hippy ski-country. He is drawn into a fundamentalist religious community, run by a charismatic who owes much to David Koresh, and becomes the sect's PR man. God has returned to America with a millennialist vengeance: the story ends with a government siege and the torching of the community.

In a good number of his novels, Updike has explored the fate of faith and its secular alternatives in his religious nation, founded on Protestant dreams and still seeking new Utopias. This is his most ambitious vision of the subject yet, exploring, in the big scale, the spirit of a secularising nation in which divine promises are constantly sullied, but never quite

entirely die. The contrast between the Reverend Wilmot's pained and yet clear-minded understanding of the modern challenge to faith and Jessie Smith's vengeful and paranoid Utopia is a measure of the distance travelled, and of the contemporary confusions of the American dream.

Updike is here the grand chronicler, he's a devout local chronicler as well. He once said the impulse of his writing was towards "instinctive realism" and now his work has become almost Victorian in its detail.

Once his writer's sensuality largely went into the world of couples, and their couplings. Now it spreads into the physical stuff of daily existence: the stained glass windows of a presbytery, its staircases and knotted newel posts, the savour of a Twenties drugstore, the motion on a trolley-car filled street, the hard work of a market garden, all get his best attention. The research is loving, solid. Oddly, the driest and least convincing segment is about Hol-

lywood and the movie industry, the finest, most felt scenes are those of Wilmot's religious crisis, which come alive as the crisis of a generation and an age.

Modernist critics used to condemn the extended family saga as the "burgher novel", a traditional and Victorian form. Yet several writers of our generation—Robertson Davies, for instance—have revived it, finding it a living way to explore the equation of history, social detail and the evolution of moral existence in a fast-changing society.

In this sense Updike—a writer of enormous skills, capable of a wide range of forms—has reverted to something that is classic and traditional in the novel, and some admirers will no doubt prefer earlier and more flamboyant books. But *In the Beauty of the Lilies*—the title comes from *The Battle Hymn to the Republic*—is also a novelist's lovingly registered, epic narrative of a 20th-century America caught between God and celluloid dreams, Victorian certainty and modern doubt, the new humanism and a grim millennial rage. It takes its place among his finest books.

Struggle to be at ease in Zion

Christopher Walker

JERUSALEM IN THE 20TH CENTURY
By Martin Gilbert
Chato & Windus, £20

There is no place which arouses such deep, fanatical feelings as does Jerusalem," observed a former deputy mayor of the holy city, Meiron Benvenisti. "There is no other place where one feels the tragedy of two nations fighting for their homeland more than in Jerusalem."

For these reasons, no other capital so small that some outsiders (notably Jewish residents of Tel Aviv) refer to it as "provincial" has attracted such a dazzling array of chroniclers. The latest to join a line which in the past 30 years has seen distinguished contributions from authors as varied as Saul Bellow, Colin Thubron and Amos Elon, is Sir Martin Gilbert, famous as the biographer of one of Britain's most ardent, non-Jewish Zionists, Winston Churchill.

Gilbert makes no bones about his own identification with the Zionist cause, while taking Benvenisti—whom he quotes at length—to heart by not trying to disguise some of the uglier aspects of Israel's struggle to retain control over what most politicians claim is

its "eternal and undivided" capital. We learn that the young Gilbert first arrived in 1971 and two years later was performing the unenviable task, undertaken by a number of Jewish student volunteers, of going to break the news to the parents bereaved in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

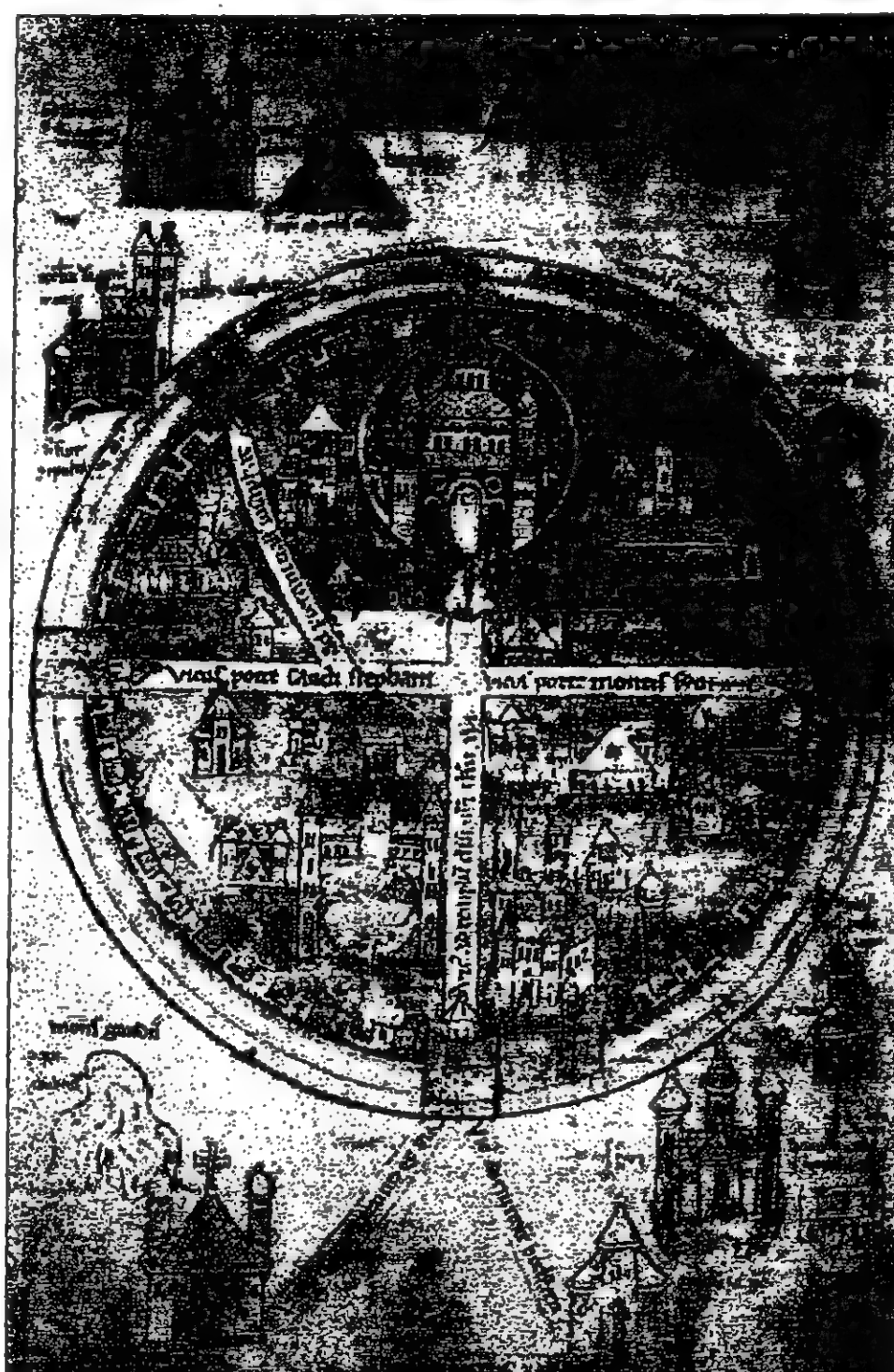
Impeccably timed for publication less than a month before negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem are due to open between Israel and the Palestinians, the final part of Gilbert's fascinating and admirably readable two-volume history is essential and enjoyable background material. Anyone wanting to understand the Jewish side of arguments that are certain to grab headlines and could, if not resolved, threaten another war more dangerous than the five already fought since the foundation of the Jewish state 48 years ago, is recommended to consult it.

But for an understanding of the equally potent Arab case as to why annexed east Jerusalem should become capital of a future Palestinian state and the reason why millions of Muslims profess a willingness to fight a jihad to bring that about, other works are required. Gilbert's publishers do him a disservice by linking his richly sourced history with the overhyped Jerusalem 3,000 celebrations, a shabby public relations stunt ignored by most of the world and even shunned by many Jews. Supposedly celebrating the 3,000th anniversary of the founding of the kingdom of David, even the date 1996 is widely disputed. Gilbert gives the game away when he reveals that similar third millennium celebrations were held in 1953-54.

Gilbert's *Jerusalem in the 20th Century* is at its unhappy, his propagandist's hat and uses shamelessly selective quotations to back his advocacy of continued Israeli sovereignty over east Jerusalem, conquered from Jordan in 1967, and still unrecognised by all but a handful of governments (which is why all the major embassies are an hour's drive away in Tel Aviv).

The book is at its best, and in my experience, unmatched for sheer breadth of acutely observed historical detail, when charting the breathtaking pace of events from the twilight of Turkish rule through the British mandate and the ruthless terrorist campaign against it by two Jewish underground groups—each including a future Israeli Prime Minister—to the bloody birth of the state and the continuing violence, despite the faint rays of hope prompted by the 1993 peace accord, between Israel and the Palestinians.

As well as dealing with the political and religious aspects of the Jerusalem question, Gilbert employs his mastery



From *City of the Great King*, ed. Nitza Rosovsky (Harvard, £25.50): one of 14 extant Crusader maps showing the streets of 12th-century Jerusalem in the form of a cross

control over anecdote and prodigious researching energies (or perhaps those of his wife, Susie) to produce a compulsive portrait of life there at different periods of the 20th century.

He records the hilarity engendered when the British decided to move Government House to the unfortunately named Hill of Evil Counsel, so called because Judas had sold Jesus there for 30 pieces of silver. He quotes the first British military governor of Jerusalem, Colonel Ronald Storrs, who captured the city's elusive charm with remark-

able lyricism: "Not the hopeless beauty of Venice, the embalméd majesty of Thebes, the abandon of Ferrara, or the melancholy of Ravenna," he confided to his diary in 1917. "But something past yet unalloyed and throbbing, that seems to confound ancient and modern, and to undate recorded history."

Although the two recent Islamic suicide bombings were too late for inclusion, Gilbert has the perspicacity to grasp the significance of what is perhaps the ugliest phenomenon in the Arab-Jewish violence which overshadows

every chapter. He quotes the Palestinian recruiter in a similar attack in 1995 as telling his interrogators cynically: "Hamas does not waste senior members with proven military successes on suicide missions. Our suicide bombers are merely human fuses replacing a chemical or electrical device."

While recognising the extraordinary passions provoked by the city immortalised for Israelis in the haunting song *Jerusalem of Gold*, Gilbert provides little reassurance that they can be reconciled.

Putting on the brakes

Gabriel Josipovici

SLOWNESS
By Milan Kundera
Faber, £12.99

Effortlessly, it seems, Milan Kundera has established himself in the West as both a highly popular and a highly admired writer. His curious blend of Czech brashness, sexual explicitness and 18th-century cool has endeared itself to a public frightened of the supposed austerities of High Modernism and bored by novels still written as though nothing had happened, in the world or in the history of the form, since Dickens and Thackeray.

Kundera has been living in Paris for a considerable time now, and has been criticised in his native country for his apparent lack of interest in publicly standing up to communism and his determination to remain an exile. But Kundera is more like Nabokov than like Havel or Grass, aloof, ironic, drawing on Kafka, Broch and Musil as well as the 18th century in his battle against bad faith in both the public and the private realms.

His last book, *Immortality*, was much his best, and it is no coincidence that it was the first to be set in his adopted, not his native, land. As with Nabokov in *Invitation of a Beheading*, the struggle to come to terms with an alien world led to a new openness, a new generosity, both moral and formal. The present book, though, his first novel to be written in French, is a major disappointment.

Driving with his wife to a country hotel, an old château, the author becomes aware of the mania for speed that seems to seize the French when they get into a car or onto a motorbike. Arrived at the hotel, he meditates on the contrast between this modern phenomenon and the 18th-century quest for slowness. More than a quest, an entire philosophy. And he recalls a story by an 18th-century writer about a night of love, set in this very same château and its grounds, where the refusal of immediate consummation is precisely the point, a work both erotic and wise.

He lets his mind wander over the character and deeds of various Frenchmen he knows, and recalls another story about a night spent in a château, this time in the course of a meeting of an entomologists' convention, which reaches its climax in a farcical series of erotic encounters. We move in and out of the 18th

and 20th century narratives, in and out of the mind of the author and his wife as they settle in, until the moment when they leave the next day.

The book starts promisingly enough, with its meditation on speed and slowness, but, as so often with Kundera, his desire to have it both ways, to fiddle the reader with the promise of sexual high-jinks and at the same time to distance himself ironically from such writing, completely backfires. The book trails off into a weak



Kundera: aloof and ironic

farce, bereft of ideas or feelings. It is not so much offensive as tedious, even though it is barely over 100 pages long. In *Immortality* Kundera's admirable gift for revealing the bad faith behind all romantic posturings was offset by his own awareness of the complexity of human character and his evident love for some of the people he had invented. Here there is nothing but coldness and distaste, and his desire to have the reader see the book as a latter-day *Rasselas* or *Les Bijoux Indiscrets* only draws attention to the gulf between himself and Johnson and Diderot.

To say that Linda Asher's translation doesn't help matters is an understatement. I have never come across a book more badly translated. It is an absolute disgrace and Faber should ask themselves how they ever let it see the light of day in this form.

Gabriel Josipovici is Professor of English at Sussex University

Wanted: spoons, porter, Bible

Robert Nye

A CHOICE OF COLERIDGE'S VERSE

Edited and Introduced by Ted Hughes
Faber, £7.99, paperback original
COLERIDGE
Selected Poems
Edited by Richard Holmes
HarperCollins, £20

TWO DAYS after his wedding, Coleridge wrote to his friend, the publisher Joseph Cottle, asking him to furnish a list of household requirements. On the list, between "two large tin spoons" and "a keg of porter", he asks for a Bible. Religion, as much as food and drink, was part of the fabric of his life.

Criticism of the poet disregards this at its own peril. Ted Hughes admits it only to regurgitate the conventional view of Coleridge as a man killed by metaphysics. In *A Choice of Coleridge's Verse* he posits a Christian Coleridge and a Pagan Coleridge, and tries to explain all in terms of their conflict.

His method is to seize on a few of the metaphors which Coleridge employed to define his thought and to relate those metaphors to "the cult of the Female in religious tradition". More supernatural biology than literary criticism, full of stuff about shamans and cauldrons and orifices, alligators in rut and other lust-mad giant reptiles, the result is not

so much Xanadu as Jurassic Park. Certainly it tells more about Hughes than it does about Coleridge. No credit is given to Robert Graves's *The White Goddess* (1948), though its shadow lies on every page. Hughes follows fashion by insisting that Coleridge's best work was done between 1797 and 1798, ignoring the fact that *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* did not reach its final form until 1817 and that even *Kubla Khan* was probably being altered as late as 1816. Containing only 27 poems, his

selection concentrates on the "visionary" Coleridge and more or less ignores the Coleridge of the confessional and conversational poems.

Textually unreliable, the book omits the last lines of *The Pains of Sleep*, so readers will not hear one of the most moving and revealing of Coleridge's cries: "To be beloved is all I need. And whom I love, I love indeed."

Richard Holmes's Coleridge: *Selected Poems* is a more serious piece of work. Holmes has been engaged for a decade on a biography of Coleridge—the second volume is due to appear next year. This selection grew naturally out of his research on that biography. He tells us how he carried photocopied poems about with him in a battered folder which became a "private, travelling edition of what I loved best and what intrigued me most about Coleridge's haunting work."

Briefly, Holmes wants to transform Coleridge's reputation by means of this selection of 101 poems, thematically

arranged, and find him a new generation of readers who will appreciate him whole, not just as an optimum-inspired dreamer. Holmes knows what he is up against: "Young readers do not like the idea of the Romantic poet growing old."

But then Coleridge knew this too, and time after time made poems from "the troubling visitations of the young self upon the old self", as well as from other awarenesses of his own shortcomings. This selection reveals him again as a great poet in many moods and modes, not neglecting any aspect of his protean genius, while Holmes's prefaces to each section and notes at the back on individual poems can be read as an essay as good as any on the subject.

Spoons, porter, Bible: here is Coleridge in graspable form. Unlike Hughes, it includes the first draft of *Dejection: An Ode* in the shape of that wonderful letter to Sara Hutchinson—338 lines composed during a single stormy night of April 1802, and only discovered in this century.

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To do our duty from an English dorm to dusk

Michael Sissons on a sensitive examination of three lives overshadowed by war and their ideals of service

In the title of *The Fatal Englishman* is an implicit riddle. Ostensibly, Sebastian Faulks's compelling and stunningly written triple biography offers separate accounts of the lives of three young Englishmen in this century. They were of successive generations, and they all died young. But, while suggesting links in his preface, Faulks invites us to contemplate what constitutes a fatal Englishman. Most readers will be intrigued to determine their own vision of what unites these characters. I can only offer mine.

"In the spring of 1921 a beautiful young Englishman set off for Paris to become the greatest painter the world had ever seen." This was Christopher Wood, 19 years old. He had been at two public schools, Marlborough and Malvern, and over him, as over all his generation, lay the terrible shadow of the boys who had gone from those schools to the trenches. He was from a conventional Edwardian family, and his father, a medical officer throughout the war, viewed with alarm his ambition to be a painter. In Paris, through the salon of Alphonse Kahn, he met many of the artistic talents assembled there after the war. He embarked on an affair with a Chilean diplomat, Antonio de Gandarillas, which proved the only constant emotional attachment of his life.

He fell in love with opium, thanks to Jean Cocteau, who encouraged him to believe in his talent as a painter. He was commissioned by Diaghilev to design the ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. None of this deterred him from falling in love with Meraud Guinness, a dilettante painter whose family viewed with horror her engagement to Wood and took urgent steps to rip it in the bud.

The story of these shenanigans is richly comic, including the inconvenient interruption of a piles operation for Gandarillas. Returning to London in 1926 Wood was an opium addict, and Meraud had been headed off at the pass by her family to marry one Alvaro Guevara, famous as "a drunk, a pouter, and a bore". While Wood made a steady reputation as painter, it has surely settled down as something less than "the greatest painter the world has ever seen". He threw himself in front of a train at Salisbury station at the age of 29.

Richard Hillary was one of the most glamorous and heroic figures of the Second World War. His account of his experience as a Spitfire pilot in the Battle of Britain, *The Last Enemy*, is an enduring contribution to the narrative of combat. Born of Australian parents, he endured a conventional public school education at Shrewsbury and was at Oxford, joining the university air squadron, when war broke out. His war was a short one. "The Battle of Britain picked off its pilots with remorseless probability," and by the time he was terribly burnt in a crash which left him in the North Sea, most of the friends with whom he had learnt to fly were dead.

It stirred me to read the moving account of Hillary's endless operations at the hands of the plastic surgeon Archibald McIndoe at Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead. My own father was killed

THE FATAL ENGLISHMAN
by Sebastian Faulks
Hutchinson, £16.99



Wood: committed suicide at 29



Hillary: killed flying at 23



Wiesenthal: a mysterious death?

in the retreat to Dunkirk. When my mother remarried, my stepfather, who had also joined up from university in 1939, had been terribly injured in the run-up to D-Day and endured 19 operations at East Grinstead: I will never forget the wards full of disfigured airmen.

In *The Last Enemy* Hillary echoed the French flyer St Exupéry's talk of "a death of flame and ice". He was desperate to return to active service, but was not fit to fly. Finally he bullied the authorities into allowing him to retrain; on an appalling January night in 1943 he killed his navigator and himself crashing into the ground. "He was only 23 when he died," and he spoke like an old man.

Jeremy Wolfenden was a friend and contemporary of mine. I was not as close to him as some, like Neal Ascherson or Godfrey Hodgson. But

he was, for me, the brightest of my generation at Oxford.

He was very funny, and there was no vestige of condescension to anyone: a most attractive characteristic in an Oxford dominated by the social and intellectual snobbery of the odious John Sparrow, Warden of Old Souls. He was cheerily, blatantly, and indiscriminately homosexual, while his father was chairing the Government Committee on Homosexual Offences and Prostitution.

I for a time shared a house in Oakley Street with some Oxford friends who included Jeremy. My abiding memory is of the night made hideous by the sounds of crashing crockery from the kitchen as Jeremy wrestled with Canadian sailors picked up in Piccadilly.

With the reform of homosexual law the dominant social theme of the day, Jeremy was a chancer: today the Editor of *The Sun* might have licked his lips. Jeremy won an All Souls fellowship but went to Moscow for *The Daily Telegraph*, an appointment at which we looked askance. He was an archetypal anti-establishment figure, and foreign assignments with *The Daily Telegraph* meant connections with British Intelligence.

Faulks is at his best in the hilarious picture that he paints of Wolfenden in Moscow, caught up in the spy case involving Greville Wynne and Oleg Penkovsky in 1962. Drinking heavily, he was set up by the KGB, whose cameras caught him misbehaving in the Hotel Ukraina.

Meanwhile, to our surprise, he married an English nanny who was also in Moscow and became implicated in the Wynne trial. He moved to New York then back to Moscow, then to Washington. Was he, we wondered, a British agent, a double agent, or triple agent? He died in 1965, the autopsy suggesting chronic alcohol abuse and death from liver failure.

Some of us have always wondered whether he was done away with by the CIA or the KGB or, given his capacity for irreverence and mischief, conceivably both. He was 31.

What threads can be run between these three short lives? Were they very English lives? I think they were. All three had conventional backgrounds against which in varying degrees they had rebelled. A shared token of their rebellion was their difficult, often bitter, relationships with their fathers.

It is hard to see Wood fitting into the ranks of the golden generation who died on the Somme. Hillary went to war in observance of those ideals, but by his death had an icy personal detachment from them. Wolfenden was of the Suez generation, as I was. We went to Eton and Winchester respectively, schools still educating us to serve an empire which by then barely existed.

In retrospect, Anthony Eden did us a great service with the Suez fiasco in disentangling us from this myth. Indeed, three direct contemporaries of mine at Winchester, whose self-destruction was chronic last year in Ved Mehta's book *Up At Oxford*, might just as easily have been candidates for *The Fatal English-*



Improbably possible: this freakish toad with eyes in the roof of its mouth is said to have been found in a Canadian garden

The most amazing journey

The improbability in Dawkins's title is life itself. To see how improbable life is, you only need consider one molecule from a living body.

Alcohol dehydrogenase is only one of the body's molecules — it detoxifies alcohol. It is an enzyme, and consists of a chain of unit molecules called amino acids: for it to work properly the right amino acids have to be in the right order. An alcohol dehydrogenase molecule might still function if it had one or two wobbly amino acids; but anyone with more than a few deviations would not survive long in places containing civilised amounts of alcohol.

There are 20 kinds of amino acid units that can occur in an enzyme. If you picked one at random, the chance that it would be right for the first link in the alcohol dehydrogenase chain would be one in 20. If you hit your chance of the first link, your chance of the second amino acid would again be one in 20: the chance of picking both at random is 1/20 x 1/20, or 1/400. And so on, for about 250 amino acids. A one in 20 here, a one in 20 there, and pretty soon you are talking real improbabilities. One in 20 multiplied by itself 250 times is a chance so small that you could have assembled amino acid sequences at random for all the history of the universe and never made alcohol

dehydrogenase. And yet it is only one of many enzymes: about 60,000 enzymes (and related molecules) are needed to build a human body.

Richard Dawkins's new book aims to explain how life nevertheless is possible. Evolution by natural selection works gradually over long periods of time. In Dawkins's metaphor of Mount Improbable, the improbable peaks we call life are reached by climbing in a sufficiently large number of small steps. He tackles two main objections.

One is that Darwinism works by chance: in Dawkins's metaphor, it is as if evolution tried to jump to the mountain peak in one leap. The other is that natural selection could not favour the initial stages of complex organs that only work as a finished product: as if the peak were surrounded on all sides by a ravine and a gradual ascent were impossible.

The first is a confusion that remains popular with imperfectly educated physicists, who like to use their self-accredited superior mathematical skills to put woolly-minded biologists in their place. Dawkins quotes some entertaining specimens. He comments: "It is grindingly,

creakingly, crashingly obvious that if Darwinism was really a theory of chance, it could not work." The alleged defect in the theory is really the starting-block problem that the theory is designed to solve.

For the second objection, Dawkins analyses two examples in detail: the evolution of flight and of the eye. These sections will not only persuade open-minded sceptics, but also be a marvellous read for people already convinced by Darwin's explanation.

Dawkins is a genius of sci-ence popularisation. If you have not read one of his books before, *Climbing Mount Improbable* is a wonderful place to begin: it is non-stop mental and literary pleasure. Some of its themes will be familiar to readers of his previous books, but the prose is so enjoyable, and the exposition so superb, that no one will regret revisiting them.

The new book is also distinct in several ways. One is its biological range. The arguments contained in it are not made with odd illustrative examples, but with a delightful range of furry, feathered, buzzing, creeping, and stinging natural history. There are also a great many —

maybe 100 — pictures, one of them rude.

The book is also good on "artificial life", or virtual evolution. Dawkins has helped to inspire the subject, and pioneered research in it. He describes actual work that has been done in the field, on virtual spider webs for instance, and then uses the general philosophy to reconsider the "selfish gene" view of the meaning of life. He begins with computer viruses. The simplest are little more than "duplicate me" programmes; they will automatically spread in certain kinds of cyber-environment.

He ends with elephants. "Like the virus DNA, [elephantine DNA] is fundamentally a Duplicate Me programme but it contains an almost fantastically large digression as an essential part of the efficient execution of its fundamental mission. That digression is an elephant."

Henry More, in 1653, believed that cattle and sheep had only been given life in the first place so as to keep their meat fresh 'till we shall have need to eat them." But life did not climb Mount Improbable to be useful to us, or for any higher purpose. Life just happens. The mountain is climbed because it is there.

Mark Ridley is a lecturer in biology at Oxford University.

Mark Ridley

CLIMBING MOUNT IMPROBABLE
by Richard Dawkins
Viking, £20

man, Alastair Clayre, one of them, was a Fellow of All Souls.

Perhaps Faulks believes that his three subjects shared a death wish. At the time of their deaths, there was something morbid about all three. Was this the condition of men living in a world and a century dominated by war, yet confused by the perceptions of duty and service to which they had been educated and whose cloying effects could not be escaped?

For many, it is also to do with the realisation that life can never finally

live up to the high expectations of the public school prefect. I remember as one of the best days in my life, early in the 1960s, when I at last felt that we might not have to go to war, as our fathers and grandfathers had done. I know that there was something of the morbid, perhaps also of the fatal Englishman, in me. I hope that at least we are no longer breeding fatal Englishmen.

Michael Sissons is joint chairman of Peters, Fraser and Dunlop

Simon is a cunning hunter



Dedicated: Simon Wiesenthal (right) and his wife (centre) at home in Vienna, 1975

Tom Bower

SIMON WIESENTHAL
By Hella Pick
Weidenfeld, £20

cised his hunt for Eichmann, appearing to invent a contribution to Israel's manhunt. Overnight, bestselling books and Hollywood glorified Wiesenthal as the heroic Nazi-hunter, transforming him into a focus for those comforted by a (albeit mythical) worldwide dragnet for thousands of other Eichmanns.

In truth, Wiesenthal had hardly contributed to Eichmann's discovery. As he reopened his Documentation Centre in Vienna and revelled in self-publicity, those responsible in Israel and West Germany for capturing Eichmann were furious. Their repressed anger combined

with Wiesenthal's other critics among the irascible Jewish community in New York transformed Vienna's Avenging Angel into a smouldering controversy.

Quite simply, Wiesenthal never realised the enormity of the injustice he was exposing. Ignorant about the Allied recruitment of incriminated Nazi scientists, intelligence of-

ficers and politicians, Wiesenthal publicised the mystery but offered few solutions and no analysis. While in Austria he was properly outraged by the Socialist party's pact with former Nazis to retain power, he was silent about the worse cover-up that had happened in West Germany.

Occasionally, Wiesenthal's international efforts to find Nazi murderers were outstandingly successful — yet he made serious mistakes. His hunts for Martin Bormann and Josef Mengele were major disasters and his criticism of the celebrated French Nazi-hunters, Serge and Beate Klarsfeld, was tasteless.

His suggestion that the East German regime was "more riddled with Nazis" than West Germany's was manifestly wrong. Worst of all was Wiesenthal's refusal immediately and outrightly to condemn Kurt Waldheim for his association with Balkan massacres.

Wiesenthal's claim, endorsed by Hella Pick, that there was no evidence that the former UN Secretary-General and Austrian President had committed a war crime, was at best pernickery and at worst an unpardonable own goal.

For his critics, in Israel and New York, it confirmed their suspicions of his dishonesty. And yet, as Hella Pick's generous and valuable tribute to Wiesenthal shows, he was often unjustly maligned. In the intensified, occasionally competitive hunt for Nazis, his principal detractors (sadly, mostly Jews) had not passed through the extermination camps and could not fathom the psychological trauma ingrained upon the survivors.

Undoubtedly his critics' antagonism hurt Wiesenthal, not least when they maliciously cast doubt on his extraordinary account of surviving the Holocaust. But dissenters like Wiesenthal invariably possess the resourcefulness to survive.

Hella Pick properly minimises the inconsistencies and flaws of Wiesenthal's life. After all, regardless of his imperfections, the 87-year-old is the Keeper of the Flame — for that, even his critics should be respectful.

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THE TIMES / DILLONS FORUM

Why we exist



Richard Dawkins

RICHARD DAWKINS, the controversial biologist, will argue at a Times / Dillons forum that Darwin has the answers to all Nature's complexities.

The forum, on April 23, marks the publication of Professor Dawkins's book, *Climbing Mount Improbable* (Viking, £20). He will discuss the difference between accident and design in Nature and show how DNA has progressed through geological time.

Chaired by Sir John Maddox, the former editor of *Nature*, the forum will be held at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, starting at 7.30pm. Tickets at £10 (concessions £7.50), which include £3 off the price of Professor Dawkins's book, are available by phoning 0171-915 6613, by faxing the coupon below on 0171-915 6611, or by sending the coupon and your remittance to Dillons, 82 Gower Street, London WC1E 6EQ, where tickets can also be purchased.

Please send me ticket(s) at £10 each (concessions £7.50)
for the Richard Dawkins Forum at the Institute of Education,
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Jockey Club fails to identify cause of Festival deaths

Queen Mary Stakes at Royal Ascot.

During this contest, Emmu O'Gorman was thrown violently to the ground when he mounted. Simply Times, pitched over within yards of the winning post. O'Gorman lay motionless for several minutes before she was taken to Addenbrooke's Hospital in Cambridge. However, the initial prognosis was favourable.

"She was conscious at the time and could feel her legs and arms," said her father, Bill, who trains Simply Times. "It looked like the horse had broken a leg, but it eventually walked up and walked away."

J Gordon	31	329	13.0	Dene O'Hall	5	31	14.7
D Milroy	7	49	14.3	L Denton	68	485	14.1
P Chapman-Hyem	16	117	12.7	P Haghen	9	53	11.3

□ **Jean-Pierre Lopez**, the jockey, was handed a two-day ban by the Pontefract stewards yesterday after finishing fourth on Nervous Rex in the Strawberry Hill Median Auction Maiden Stakes. Lopez, who is in his first season in Britain, was judged to have used his whip incorrecrtly and is suspended from April 26-27.

[illegible]

12/1 Dance On A Cloud
14/1 Tabriz
16/1 Galapino
18/1 Hamlet
20/1 Daunting Destiny
100/1 Jean Pierre

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LATEST ODDS ON WILLIAM HILL TV TEXT
• Teletext on CH4 P601/602/603

William HILL

The key to a music feast

Bit of a lonesome rogue? Must be McShane

There ought to be a law against theme tunes that include a swooping double bass, really there ought. They make the whole thing too easy. From the first lazily slid note, redolent of late nights and low dives, we know exactly what we are in for. Don't tell me, it's about a chap - bit of a rogue, bit of a loner - who somewhere along the line has mislaid his first name. Tinkle, tinkle went a second-and-a-half of misleading piano and then, doo-wop. Madson (BBC1) had arrived.

Madson - surprise, surprise - turned out to be a bit of a rogue. Used to be a professional gambler but has spent the past eight years in prison which, by the way, why he is also a bit of a loner. But now he is out, having gained a law degree and used it to conduct a successful appeal against his conviction for murdering his wife, John (what are formulas for, if not

to be broken?) Madson is now a man on a mission. He wants a job, a proper job.

He will, of course, get one but we're getting ahead of ourselves. Two things needed to be established in last night's opening episode. First Ian McShane needed to cast out the friendly and highly profitable ghost of *Lovejoy*. This he did pretty successfully - where *Lovejoy* (another ex-con) was scheming and funny, Madson is industrious and miserable. *Lovejoy* would sell you the mid-night oil, Madson burns it.

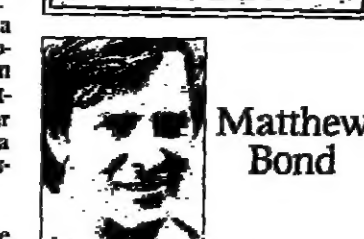
The second crucial thing was to establish Madson as a man alone, yet surrounded by attractive women. Hardly a challenge to a resourceful casting director, but successfully arranged nonetheless. There was Elaine (Shirley Anne Field), his prison visitor, who now Madson is free is outwardly concerned that he might be manipulating her. Secretly, you rather

get the impression that she wouldn't much mind if he did. The ghost of Lady Jane walked again.

Then there was Magda (Joanna Kanska), high-flying lawyer, potential employer and first flirt in line. "No mayonnaise," they shouted meaningfully at each other from time to time. What hope a relationship based on salad dressing? We shall see.

Lastly there was Sarah (Jayne Ashbourne), who spent most of the episode as Madson's daughter-in-law until her husband (and his son) succumbed to the drug overdose that had already left him in a coma. She was distraught, he was distraught. She, however, is very pretty and he is newly out of prison. A curious episode with a prostitute (I'll have a cup of tea please, Mandy) may have established him as a man of commendable restraint and she may be young enough to be...

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

well, his son's widow, but I fear complications lie ahead. As is traditional in McShane productions, male companionship comes in the form of a double act: Gordon Berry (Thomas Craig) and his Uncle Donald (David Arlen), two likeable rogues who run a car repossessor business together with a bit of freelance breaking and entering. How they know Madson has not yet been ex-

plained, but my guess is that Eric and Tinker introduced them.

Apart from Madson's surprising like and one horrendous edit which saw Magda begin a sentence on one side of the road and finish it on the other, the series made an encouraging start. Swoop away, Mr Bassman.

From doo-wops to ding-ding-ding, *University Challenge* (BBC2) last night reached the semi-final stage in absolutely cracking form. Jeremy Paxman is now perfectly at home in the chair, the questions range from the easy to the fiendishly esoteric and, best of all, last night was a serious grudge match, pitting the effortless superiority of Selwyn College, Cambridge, against the angry young men (and they were all men) of the London School of Economics. Or so I thought.

It soon became clear that my student stereotypes were a good decade or two out of date. "Hello,

I'm David Thwaites from the reform county of Rutland," said a friendly looking chap from the LSE. In my day he would have been an egg-throwing member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Rutland. As for Selwyn, they seemed to have perfected the art of effortless inferiority. On the rare occasions they did bother to press their buzzers, they were nearly always wrong.

Unstoppable best describes the LSE team. "In June 1995 which multinational...?" "Shell." OK, so you'd expect them to be good on the unacceptable faces of capitalism, but it didn't stop there. They got two out of three on Einstein (I got one and only then because it came up in the first chapter of *A Brief History of Time*), three out of three on 20th-century philosophers (none - how was I to know Kierkegaard was 19th century?)

and three out of three on department stores (two, but then I've never been to Moscow). An LSE that knows department stores is surely destined to go all the way.

On Channel 4, a Dispatches team was showing that they knew an awful lot about Sudan's alleged role as a centre for training Islamic terrorists. Unfortunately, neither Deborah Davies, the reporter, nor Dominic Ozanne, the director, seemed to have given quite enough thought to how to make their subject interesting for others.

But, once you get past a bafflingly complex opening ten minutes and some over-hostile questioning from Davies, the pair got into their stride. Their research was extensive and the subsequent allegations - at least, as far as a layman could determine - impressively well sourced. Investigative journalism is expensive and out of fashion. Those that pursue it deserve our encouragement.

BBC

- 6.00am Business Breakfast (43760)
- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (CeeFax) (74031)
- 9.00am Breakfast News Extra (CeeFax) (7742692)
- 9.45am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (7975654)
- 9.55am Kibbey (s) (1035147)
- 10.30am Good Morning with Anne and Nick (s) (31857)
- 12.00pm News (CeeFax) regional news and weather (733857) 12.05pm Room for Improvement (s) (8516147)
- 12.35pm Going for Gold with Henry Kelly (s) (5667505)
- 1.00pm One O'Clock News (CeeFax) and weather (84418)
- 1.30pm Regional News and weather (94308302)
- 1.40pm Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (44418166)
- 2.00pm The Flying Doctors. Adventure and action with Australia's flying medical services (CeeFax) (s) (38459)
- 3.30pm Playdays (s) (1540760) 3.50pm Dinobabies (s) (1537296) 4.10pm The Wizard of Oz (CeeFax) (274747) 4.35pm The Book Street Band (s) (CeeFax) (s) (3346857)
- 5.00pm Newsround (CeeFax) (1559708)
- 5.10pm The Ant and Dec Show. Variety show hosted by Ant McPartlin and Declan Donnelly. (CeeFax) (s) (1048012)
- 5.35pm Neighbours (s) (CeeFax) (s) (294586)
- 5.55pm News (CeeFax) and weather (741)
- 6.30pm Regional News magazines (321)
- 7.00pm Top of the Pops. (CeeFax) (s) (3437)
- 7.30pm EastEnders. (CeeFax) (s) (505)
- 8.00pm Wildlife on One: Stoats in the Priority. The first film of the elusive wild stoat in its native habitat, among the gardens and ruins of Mount Grace Priory in North Yorkshire. (CeeFax) (s) (8557)
- 8.30pm Noel's NTV Stars. Noel Edmonds looks at some favourite moments from the last five years of Noel's House Party (s) (1692)
- 9.00pm Party Political Broadcast by the Conservative Party (173741)
- 9.05pm Nine O'Clock News (CeeFax) regional news and weather (597147)
- 9.35pm Absolutely Fabulous. Edina has reached the milestone of her 40th birthday (s). (CeeFax) (s) (199789)
- 10.05pm Making Babies. A focus on Professor Robert Winston who runs Britain's busiest IVF clinic at London's Hammer Smith Hospital. After 11 weeks of tension, Ray and Tania reach the stage of the operation to collect the eggs. Anna and Jack have already gone beyond this, with eggs fertilised and in the test-tube. But Anna knows that, at the age of 42, her chances of success are slim (CeeFax) (s) (672760)
- 10.55pm Question Time from Southampton. The guests are the MPs David Willetts, George Robertson and Diana Madoocok, and a Green Party spokesman, Pat Alexander (CeeFax) (2814418)
- 12.00pm Film: Longtime Companion (1990) with Bruce Davison. A group of New York gay men come to terms with the onslaught of Aids. Directed by Norman René (CeeFax) (414277)
- 1.35pm Weather (201797)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCodes
The numbers next to each programme listing are Video PlusCodes, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ handset. (The numbers in the Video PlusCodes are for the programme only, which is recorded. VideoPlus+ is a registered trademark of Video Development Ltd.)

SKY NEWS

- 7.00am News (27147) 8.00am Press Your Luck (36272) 9.00am Live Connection (881323) 9.30am The Couch and Sofa Show (881323) 10.00am Jeopardy! (287732) 11.00am Jeopardy! (287732) 12.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 1.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 1.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 2.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 2.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 3.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 3.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 4.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 4.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 5.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 5.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 6.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 6.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 7.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 7.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 8.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 8.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 9.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 9.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 10.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 10.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 11.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 11.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 12.00pm Jeopardy! (287732) 12.30pm Jeopardy! (287732) 1.00am Jeopardy! (287732) 1.30am Jeopardy! (287732) 2.00am Jeopardy! (287732) 2.30am Jeopardy! (287732) 3.00am Jeopardy! (287732) 3.30am Jeopardy! 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THURSDAY APRIL 18 1996

RFU faces cup cash dispute

Final demand presented by leading clubs

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE two leading rugby union clubs in England yesterday heaped further troubles on the beleaguered Rugby Football Union (RFU).

Bath and Leicester demanded a greater share of the gate receipts for the Pilkington Cup final, the showpiece of the domestic game, which they will contest in front of 75,000 supporters at Twickenham on May 4. The attendance will create a world record for a club match and yield £12 million.

The RFU, already at loggerheads with the leading clubs in the Courage Clubs Championship over the structure of the game in the new professional era, now faces a potentially messy dispute over money with two of the most influential rebel clubs, which are due to play other major fixtures, apart from the cup final, at Twickenham within the next five weeks.

Peter Wheeler, the Leicester chief executive, believes the finalists are entitled to greater financial consideration. "We are talking to the RFU and I hope things can be sorted out," he said. Leicester have sold £300,000-worth of tickets for the final and Wheeler claims that administrative costs will eat into their financial return from the competition.

Last season a limit of £35,000 was placed upon the money accruing to the finalists. This year the RFU will

take 15 per cent of the gate, to cover their hiring and management costs, and each of the finalists will receive four per cent, around £40,000. This situation is to be reviewed in time for next season but Tony Hallett, the RFU secretary, said no amendment would be made to an arrangement that had been agreed by all clubs at the start of this season.

"We believe, and I have had messages of support from many clubs, that there is no intention whatsoever to leave the Pilkington Cup from the top end of the game," Hallett said. That is somewhat at odds with the statement last week

Smith retires 42
Triple tie 42

by the English Professional Rugby Union Clubs that they would boycott RFU competitions next season in their present format, although they have no quarrel with the structure of the cup.

Hallett did, however, hold out some hope to Bath and Leicester that their costs could be covered, by as much as £10,000, in a manner that would not affect the sums already earmarked for distribution to all participating clubs.

"There is no doubt this final will take place at Twickenham between Bath and Leicester,"

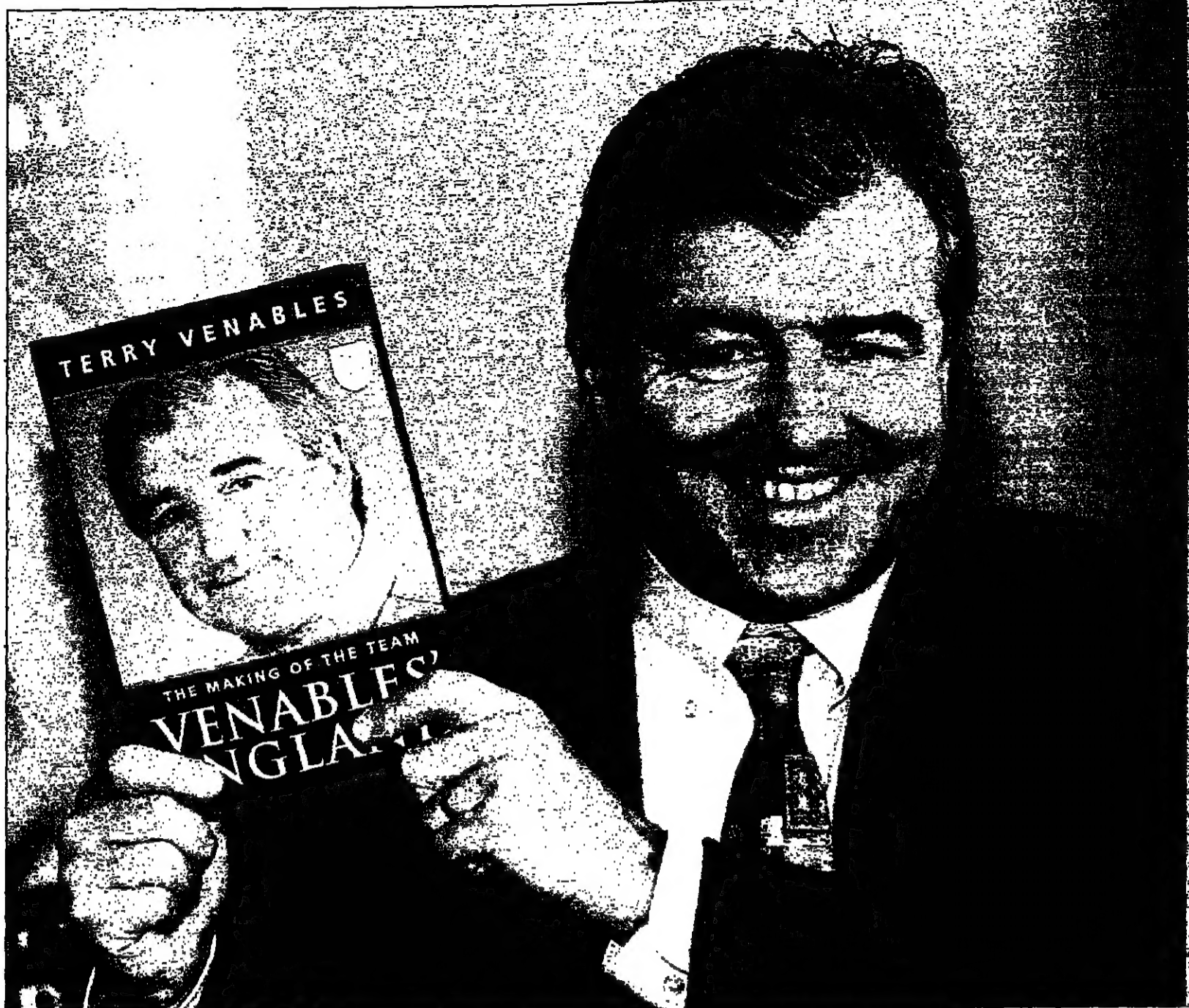
he said, a statement that would have been unnecessary a few months ago but now reflects the lack of accord between governors and governed. "The game has changed a lot since September, people and management have changed, but the clubs entered the competition knowing the conditions," Hallett said. "For next season we will be able to discuss conditions for the clubs in the new era and a distribution that may be more equitable."

Hallett was happier when discussing an extension to Pilkington's sponsorship of the competition, which was announced yesterday. "The most significant thing is to assess the distribution of the spoils of this sponsorship," he said. "The distribution in the future needs to be adapted and to reflect the position you achieve in the competition."

Pilkington has been a faithful ally to the RFU since 1988. The present, three-year contract, worth £750,000, will increase in value to around £1.1 million for a further three years, thanks largely to Pilkington's withdrawal from the junior club knockout tournament after next month's final between Heston and Medicals. The junior clubs will join forces under a new sponsor with a new intermediate competition.

That is of little significance when set against the vote of confidence in the RFU that Pilkington's decision represents. "We see a great future for the cup competition," David Roycroft, the glass company's head of corporate affairs, said, declining to be drawn into the tortuous politics of rugby. It is also an act of faith, given the uncertainty that exists among the five nations over negotiations with television companies.

Television exposure is critical in any sponsorship agreement. Whether within or without the five nations, the RFU seeks a mixed package of terrestrial and satellite television coverage.



Despite the setbacks before next week's England match, Venables manages a smile at the launch of his book yesterday. Photograph: Martin Boddall

Venables unfazed by twists in the plot

By OLIVER HOLT

THE assorted feet of a throng of photographers sank deep into the plush sofas ranged around his west London club, but Terry Venables did not bat an eye. Beside Alan Shearer's Gilmore Groin (strain) and the setback to Tony Adams's dodgy knee, a few scuffed cushions pale into insignificance. The England football coach had had enough news about the breaking of his team; yesterday, he arrived to celebrate the making of it for the launch of his new book, *Venables England*.

So the cameras whirled, coffee cups clunked on their saucers and Venables posed patiently with the new publication, an intelligent journey through his two-year spell in

charge of the national team, a dissection of his tactics, his court cases, his relationship with Paul Gascoigne and the lessons England can learn from Carlos Alberto Parreira's preparation of the Brazilian team for the 1994 World Cup.

Its launch is as good an indication as any that the final phase of the build-up to this summer's European championship is underway, but if Tuesday had been dominated by doom and gloom about the injuries to Adams and Shearer, Venables, never one for making excuses, sauntered into the Scribes West bar after the pictures had been taken and opined that they might, in fact, be a blessing in disguise.

"People talk about how some of our clubs have taken part in 65 games this season

and the damage that could do to the players' fitness," Venables said. "But there is not one player in our whole group who has played more than 50. It goes right down to someone like Jamie Redknapp, who has played 30 or 32."

"A lot of members of the squad have been injured and that has given them a bit of a breather in some cases. It can be like a mini-break for some of them, perhaps even Shearer. He is one of those who wants to play all the time and it could just be nature's way of telling him to slow down."

"I have tried to train myself in a positive fashion not to be sidetracked by all these injuries. It is very unfortunate for me and the coaching staff but the show goes on and we have

to make sure we show the same sort of confidence in the players who come in instead. They might be the ones who end up playing in the tournament. That is why we have built a big squad of people that can handle whatever comes their way."

Venables, who named Jason Wilcox, of Blackburn Rovers, and Sol Campbell, of Tottenham Hotspur, in his squad for the match against Croatia at Wembley next Wednesday, said he had tried to bring the team's style of play closer to the European norm. "You have got to be careful you don't blast them with too much information, though," he said. "It's a bit like putty. If you just put a bit in the frame, it grows and gets stronger. If you put a big dob on, the wind

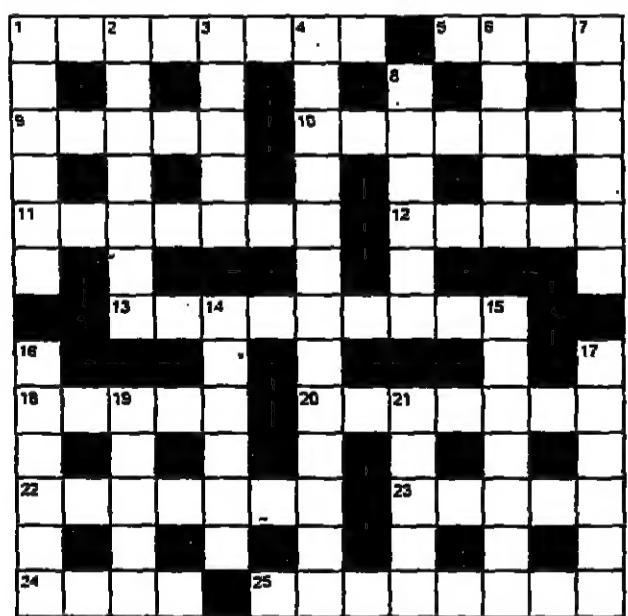
comes and blows it all out. You have got to make sure it sticks."

His face only creased into a frown when he had to deny fresh reports that the FA was still trying to persuade him to stay on as manager after the European championship. "I'm getting fed up with it," he said. "The situation is exactly the same. Someone has taken a flier and gathered all this up again. They have said (in talking to Sir Bert [Millichamp, the FA chairman]) but I haven't spoken to him. We've got no plans to speak as far as I know. He may ring me this afternoon, but at the moment, I can assure you there are no plans to speak."

Ferguson out, page 45
Bayern's final step, page 45

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD

No 759 in association with
BRITISH MIDLAND



ACROSS

- 1 Get in front of (8)
- 5 SE Asia country, capital Vientiane (4)
- 9 Slightly drunk (5)
- 10 Fruit-free field (7)
- 11 First manmade satellite (7)
- 12 Check (company's) books (5)
- 13 Vanish (9)
- 16 Frantz --, opera composer (5)
- 20 Crossing (7)
- 22 A nuisance: one whose name is forgotten (2-3-2)
- 23 With ingrained dirt (5)
- 24 Lower part of decorated wall (4)
- 25 Law-breaker (8)

DOWN

- 1 Dull-witted (6)
- 2 Expatriate on (7)
- 3 Wear (clothes) before purchase (3,2)
- 4 Effortlessly outdo (5,5,3)
- 6 Bestow (5)
- 7 Staid: give calming drug (10)
- 8 Abrasive: problematic situation (6)
- 14 Walk purposefully, fast (6)
- 15 Withdraw (decision) (7)
- 16 Exclusive: shut (6)
- 17 (Horse) with stamina (6)
- 19 Store against shortage (5)
- 21 Maintain (in debate) (5)

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THE WINNER will receive a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on British Midland's domestic or international network.

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Post your entry to Times Two Crossword, PO Box 6886, London E2 8SP to arrive by next Monday. The winners' names and solution will appear on Wednesday.

Name/Address

SOLUTION TO NO 758

ACROSS: 1 Bowler 7 Insider 8 Shingle 9 Twelfth 11 Skewer 13 Dead Souls 15 Pen-super 19 Durham 21 Gentled 23 At first 24 Derrick 25 Eject
DOWN: 1 Basis 2 Waiver 3 Rugged 4 Diet 5 Rialto 6 Pop talk 10 Wedded 12 Resume 14 Jeezbel 16 Squire 17 Ruffie 18 Charge 20 Motel 22 Lake

Reid checks over final score

By DAVID MADDOCK

PETER REID, the Sunderland manager, is not ready to listen to the entreaties of his club's supporters just yet. "Cheer up Peter Reid," they beseech to the tune of *Daydream Believer*, by The Monkees. It is a reference to his now renowned, unmovable demeanour in the face of an impressive rise up the Endisleigh Insurance League first division. So far, even after Sunderland virtually guaranteed promotion on Tuesday evening, their tenuous pleas have been ignored.

Reid did conduct a ribald group through the whole, recorded song in the bar after the victory over Birmingham

City at Roker Park on Tuesday. He was, however, as poker-faced as ever and he has, he said, good reason.

"When I was a young player with Bolton, back in the late Seventies, we were in pole position, absolute certainties to go up, two seasons on the run and we messed it up right at the death. Those failures have scarred me, they are still with me now," he said.

"I suppose that's why I want it nailed on with Sunderland. I won't start celebrating until we are absolutely certain of walking out in that Premier League next season. Mind you, it would take a hell of a disaster now to stop us."

Sunderland, in fact, could be certain of promotion come

Saturday evening without kicking a ball. Crystal Palace, the only side who can now stop them, must win to extend this particular drama into the final act. Even then, a point is all that is required from Sunderland's last three games and, given the fact that they are the best team in the division, it should not prove too elusive.

Reid will then have the imposing task of preparing the North East club for life among the high rollers. It is an altogether faster pace, in the FA Carling Premiership, and Reid knows it, having spun the dice with Manchester City as a novice manager.

He did well, in fact, steering them to top-six placings in

consecutive seasons before he was driven out, largely because of a poor relationship with the chairman.

"Of course there is not a vast amount of money to spend here at Sunderland when we do go up, but then there wasn't at Manchester City," he said. "People have been writing Sunderland off already, but in many ways there is a similarity between this club and City."

"There will be money made available and if it is spent sensibly then there is no reason why we can't achieve what City did when I was there as manager. There has been a lot said about our prospects, mostly negative, but I am pretty confident about our chances."

Monarchs put The Fridge on ice

By RICHARD WETHERELL

WILLIAM "The Refrigerator" Perry, the former National Football League (NFL) giant whose bulk was employed to relaunch the World League of American Football (WLAF), has been frozen out by his new team, the London Monarchs, after only one game.

The Fridge, who became a household name in the United States and beyond when he helped the Chicago Bears to win the Super Bowl in 1985, was the focal point of the Monarchs' pre-season publicity drive off the field, but he has lost his place as defensive tackle to a home-grown talent, Lewis Capes, son of the shot-putter Geoff, for the match against Frankfurt Galaxy on Saturday.

In fact, Capes played a greater role than Perry during the Monarchs' loss to the Scottish Claymores last Sunday, despite being listed on the team sheet as Perry's understudy. On the latest sheet, the players' roles have been reversed. Capes is a beneficiary of the league's rule stating that a national player must be on the field for each team on alternating sets of plays, a set being one offensive and one defensive series. But it is Perry,



Perry: hindered by his weight

rather than any of the lesser-known figures on the defensive line, who steps down.

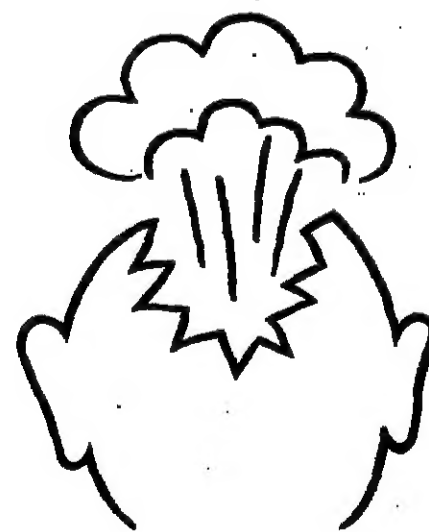
Perry had weight problems throughout his NFL career with the Chicago Bears and the Philadelphia Eagles -- indeed, even before it. He was born weighing 131b and is listed at "350-lb" in

official hand-outs. That 25st looked something of an underestimate on Sunday, when extra weight hindered him. Indeed, he struggled to accelerate into a trot. Perry, who has the standard World League \$12,500 (about £8,000) playing contract but receives a reported \$100,000 for promotional purposes, is used purely as a run-stopper in the team.

As the son of famous father, Capes, though, is used to following in large footsteps. The 24-year-old played for the Monarchs last year and made progress in training camp this year. Maurice Spencer, the Monarchs' defensive assistant, said: "If any national player is going to succeed, it's going to be him." At 6ft 4in, Capes is two inches taller than The Fridge but weighs, officially, 21st.

After the match, Bobby Hammond, the head coach, was asked about Perry's performance. His answer, though avoiding direct criticism, was more condemning than any finely-crafted soundbite. The 24-21 loss has resulted in three players being dropped. David Gordon, who on Sunday missed, by an embarrassing margin, a field goal which would have won the match, is replaced Roger Ruzek, former Dallas Cowboys kicker.

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